Elsie Robertson
With W. Asnb
Compliments

Reminiscences of Auld Ayr.

REMINISCENCES

OF

AULD AYR

(REPRINTED FROM THE "AYR OBSERVER,"

TO WHICH IS ADDED

SKETCHES AND TRADITIONS

DESCRIPTIVE OF AYR SINCE THE BEGINNING

OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

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PREFACE.

At the request of numerous readers of "The Ayr Observer," it has been arranged to issue these Reminiscences in a more permanent volume form, many considering them to be of more than the passing interest they have attained in their periodical appearance in a newspaper. There is no claim made for them of special literary merit, and possibly the events recorded are not of such interest as to necessitate the appearance of this volume. The historian of Ayr for the past century has yet to make his appearance. A much more complete history than these Reminiscences remains a felt want, and the substance of these chapters can only be looked upon as assisting the more complete history, which the importance of Ayr now fully warrants being written. The original intention, indeed, of the writer of these Reminiscences was only to give a series of stories connected with the best known citizens of Auld Ayr, which were liable to be forgotten or to be re-told, modernised, and placed to the credit of more recent citizens. Some of these stories, however, lose much of their point when given without the characteristics of their parent being known, hence an attempt has been made to combine the character about whom the story is told with the story itself. The idea grew that it would be advisable to give events as well, and this has resulted in these detached reminiscences, giving a view of Ayr as it was in the middle of the last century, and comparing its condition then with its position now.

It will not be thought out of place if in the early chapters prominence is given to the churches and ministers of the Disruption times. At present when we are hearing so much noise over the Union which has created such a commotion since 1900, it is of special interest to go back to times

when dis-union was in the air and churches were rent asunder instead of being joined to dwell in harmony. The Disruption was certainly one of the most remarkable features of the middle of the last century. In 1843 we had the extraordinary spectacle of a church being rent asunder—brethren refusing to dwell in unity, hiving off from the Establishment, yet holding by the Establishment principles and refusing to join with Dissent. There was also a firm hold kept of the Confession of Faith, and ministers were driven from the Church for nonadherence to that Confession, and these formed the Morrisonian body. Now those who expelled Morrison and his followers have cast the Confession aside, abjured the Establishment principle, and are themselves cast out by those who, though few in number, adhere to the original principles. The irony of fate could not be better illustrated, though the question may be asked, Are we not wiser than we were? have two generations taught us nothing? After all, the Church Crisis of 1904 is but "a storm in a tea cup" compared with that of 1843. There is not the same self-sacrificing feeling now among pastors and people as there was then. Churches, glebes, manses, and good stipends were voluntarily thrown up, and the congregations in most cases came forward and made good the loss. Now the whole fight is for the possession of the churches and manses then voluntarily erected, which few are willing to relinquish, well knowing that there are few flocks now who would be so willingly shorn as they were in1843. At all events it forms an interesting comparison—the position now and then. Possibly, a fair comparison may induce more serious thoughts being devoted to the question of churches and real union than has been given for some time past. The hysterical utterances of many indicate a degree of hypocrisy, which, unfortunately, is too often associated with church questions, I should rather say church quarrels.

Following the churches it will be admitted that "My schools and schoolmasters" call for a few chapters which are likely also to lead to some pleasant and unpleasant comparisons. There were no school rates then; no free education

except such as was obtained from the benefactions of those who so well knew the advantages of education. The old Parish Schools are now among the things that were. The questions to answer now are: How are we better? How much is our present system costing us? and is it worth the money? In this at least there can be no harm in making a comparison.

Appearing as these reminiscences did, first of all in a newspaper as "The Recreations of a Member of the Press," it will not be considered out of place that the Press of Ayr should have a chapter devoted to it as well as the churches and schools, and possibly it will be found to be of as much interest to many as the other chapters.

The prominent members of the community after these have been noticed have several chapters given to them. We hear of the good old times; it was the good old personages who made these good old times, and there are many whose memory it would be a pity to forget for all time. These naturally include members of Parliament and civic dignitaries, as well as many who would not take, or could not get, these offices. Many of them were Warwicks in their day, content to pull strings, and preferring to make kings rather than be kings themselves. There are powers behind the throne, also powers behind the Town Council Board, and in these reminiscences a peep has been given of the latter. Opinions are expressed freely in these chapters with which it is not expected every one can agree. The difficulty, however, will be admitted of entirely suppressing expressions of opinion. There is no pretence made in the Reminiscences of being impartial—the impartial man is not discovered yet; they are given for what they are worth; the partisanship, if such it can be called, is openly avowed and reasons are adduced for the opinions given.

There are other subjects taken up, however, which are non-controversial. A few chapters are devoted to the railways and steamers. The comparison to be drawn between the period when railways were non-existent, or in their

infancy, and how we live now is interesting. The Disruption and the introduction of railways were contemporaries. The fifth decade of the nineteenth century marked the advent of both, while they necessitated changes which had no connection with each other. Still they were events working together, let us say, for good, and no apology is needed for connecting them, happening as they did about the same period. In Scotland, at anyrate, the former has made as great a change in religion as the latter did in the commercial world. Both have led to a considerable amount of competition, and have yielded results which have been unexpected. It is only by comparing how we lived then with how we live now that we will ascertain whether the effects have been good, bad, or indifferent.

What Ayr will be like 50 years hence we may form some idea when we compare it with what it was 50 years ago. The progress made in the past half-century has been great; evidently now, however, the progress is being accelerated, and, consequently, the change will be greater. Will railways and cycles be things of the past, like the old stage coach; and motors, flying machines, and air-ships take their place? We can speak with some degree of confidence of the past; the future affords only room for speculation. The reminiscences of these old times are given just for what they are worth; the writer professes to have no great conceit of them. It has been much more a recreation and a pleasure than a labour or trouble to him to narrate them, and in this spirit an attempt has been made to be more gay than grave. It is well to cherish hope for the future; but it is equally well to look back with a degree of cheerfulness. It is to be hoped readers will read them in the same spirit.

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Reminiscences of Auld Ayr.

CHAPTER I.

Auld Ayr Worthies.

There is much in the history of Ayr well worth preserving, but which will be lost as time passes unless an attempt is made to have the sayings and doings of many of our well-known citizens of half-a-century ago recorded as they well deserve to be. Those who occupied a prominent part in public affairs in the fifties and sixties of last century have now "crossed the bourne," even the memory of many of them is forgotten, while the events connected with those who are remembered seem almost to be a fragment of ancient history. There is no reason why they should be so. Certainly, respect is due to the feelings of their descendants, many of whom are now respected citizens of the "Auld Toun," who might not like some episodes of a delicate nature recalled. Still, chronicles may be written without causing painful reflections, and much full of interest and not unpleasant may be preserved, giving us an insight into the "Auld Ayr" of that period which need not wound tender feelings nor affect any of the citizens of modern Ayr; while the changed times and circumstances may be taken into account, and, if reasonably considered, will bring no discredit to their descendants. The object in giving the reminiscences connected with individuals is more to give a picture of the olden times than of the olden personalities. The two certainly are inseparable, but as it is certainly not the object to bring discredit on the Burgh, neither will any attempt be made to bring discredit on any one connected with it. Allusion has been made to the changed times; that will be brought out clearly, and what may now be considered quaint and savouring of the primitive and commonplace compared with what we may consider the higher-class civilisation of this more staid Ayr of the present day. The question may arise if even now, with an advanced education and refinement we are any better or happier or even more respectable members of society. For instance, it may well be questioned if the modern swell (public or private) dinner of six to ten courses, with wines and liquors, affords more real pleasure now, or conduces more to friendship than the Provost's and the Deacon's pies and ale, followed by toddy,

of half-a-century ago; or if the sober or rather sombre garments, homespun or otherwise, with which one went to kirk or market then, conduced less to comfort or respectability than the masculine or feminine gaudy and gingerbread gaiety of the present time. Each will have its day, and we must remember that in all probability those who are coming after us fifty or sixty years hence will look back on our present habits with the same feeling as we have of those concerning whom these reminiscences are now to be written. Each will have its day and generation; it is unnecessary to make too much of a comparison. There will be a difficulty in arranging the order in which these reminiscences are to be given. No attempt will be made to give any prominence to individuals who might be thought entitled to some precedence. Somewhat of a continuous narrative will be attempted, and one "notable" will lead on to another, the whole forming a picture or a history of the times, that picture simply being Auld Ayr as it was—social and political—serious and amusing—during the past half century.

In remarking that it is intended to give brief notices of the old worthies or characters of Ayr at that period mentioned, it is not to be understood that those mentioned are to be what were more common in Ayr and many other places many years ago than they are now, namely, eccentric or half-witted persons, or what were denominated "characters" with some weakness or mental or physical infirmity about them. The object is more to illustrate Ayr with brief sketches of its citizens, respectable douce Burghers, Ministers, Schoolmasters, Bankers, Doctors, Lawyers, Provosts, Bailies, Councillors, Deacons, and the better-class merchants and townsmen, rightly known as the "honest men" of Burns' time. Ayr certainly had in the time described many "characters," some of them remembered still, but the memory of whose existence may be allowed to drop. They were known by their sobriquets, though several of them were conected with respectable families; and in addition to being somewhat weak, mentally, were also sometimes deformed in body. Old readers will still remember "Blood," "Rumpy," "Hang-a-hen," "Gibb," "Get-a-a wife," and many others, all of whom were in evidence on all occasions; but such like, somehow, are never seen now. A good story is told of a citizen who had left Ayr for about 30 years, who on his return was asking after those worthies, was told that they were all either locked up in the Asylum at Glengall or put into the Town Council. The wit is so apparent that Town Councillors will not take offence at the broad insinuation. Only on special occasions do they

sometimes show signs of any connection with these "characters." These will not be further alluded to.

One of the oldest notables I remember is

JOHN M'NAUGHT,

a worthy old soul, whose memory I cherish as one of the most decent old men I ever met. I think he was the working partner in the firm of Wilson & Co., upholsterers, Sandgate Street, which was quite as well established and respected then as it is at the present day. He was full of fun and good nature, and could well have given most interesting reminiscences of even fifty years previous to the times which are now about to be chronicled. His recollection was quite clear as to the period of the French War which finished at Waterloo; Trafalgar and Waterloo were more vividly impressed on his memory than the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny are remembered now by those who have reached the alloted span. He was a humorist of the first water. He knew everybody, was highly respected, and his fund of anecdotes was inexhaustible. I remember yet his picture of Ayr away in times when George IV. was King. The picture can be realised from the following story: John's apprenticeship was nearly out, and no doubt as a full grown boy—boys were boys then till they came of age, not young gentlemen—he gave evidence of the humour he possessed when a man full up in years. He was also a leader among his chums, and one night he and they ventured on an escapade which could not be possible now-a-days, and would not even be thought of.

At that time all the signboards above the various shops in town were really signboards; that is to say, boards fastened to the wall above the shop doors and windows, and it was so arranged that anyone removing from one shop to another could take down his signboard and put it up again in the new premises to which he had removed. The idea occurred to the minds of John M'Naught and his chums, to the number of about twenty, that without waiting for any change of tenancy, some little work in that way could be done to give themselves some fun and amuse their fellow-townsmen at the same time. So, waiting till the shades of night had fallen—and be it remembered night policemen, gas, and electricity were then unknown—they commenced a good hard night's work as a labour of love. As rapidly as it was possible to be done, they proceeded to take down a great number of signboards and transfer them to other shops. Grocers' signs were transferred to butchers' shops, and butchers' signs, in turn, doing duty above ironmongers'

shops. The changing was made very general, even the gilt bunch of grapes which at that time distinguished the King's Arms door was transferred to a hatter's shop door nearly opposite, and a barber's pole was put up in its place. Very few places of business escaped the attention of the zealous youths who worked all night till daybreak, having done a night's work which would bear favourable comparison with the hardest day's work they had done for a long time. Their reward came in the morning. Needless to say, they did not go to their usual work in the morning till after breakfast. They were more intent on innocently sauntering along High Street, Sandgate, and the other streets in the Burgh, waiting to see the douce shopkeepers coming to open their places of business, and watching their bewildered faces as they looked at what was their own shop doors and windows with the strange signboards which now stood above them. Some such thought was evidently crossing their minds as that they must have taken too much liquor on the night previous and some business had been transacted which they had forgotten. There was a Rip Van Winkle feeling that they had taken a long sleep and had only now awakened to find changes had taken place which had not even disturbed their dreams. It did not occur to the perplexed merchants that the sweet, innocent youths who were sauntering about apparently unconscious of what had taken place, were enjoying their bewilderment to the full, their only trouble being to suppress all signs of any knowledge of by whom the signs had been transferred. It is to be presumed men swore in those days, if they did not, at least, they would give vent to some cursory remarks to indicate their bewilderment. The scene can be better imagined than described, and the perpetrators' enjoyment must have been immense, for in many cases it was irrepressible, leading to discovery by the victims of the very practical joke, and the jokers. In his more mature years I have heard John telling the story over and over again, giving details of different shopkeepers' bewilderment and surprise at the transformation which had taken place during the night. It may readily be guessed that the labour expended on having all the signboards returned to their proper places, and the joiner's bills sent in for work done in putting them right, would furnish good grounds for a belief that the labour of journeymen did not reach to that high standard of smartness which was shown by the apprentices engaged in undoing their own work even would not be so smart in putting right what they had on that night put wrong.

There are numerous other stories I might give in which old John played a prominent part. These, however, will

appear in connection with others who will be briefly noticed as these reminiscences will continue. But I may give here one, not of the time when George IV. was king. It is not so humorous, but at the same time it illustrates the system of church discipline in the early years of the Victorian reign. My old friend John was not a party concerned in the story, but it concerned four intimate friends of his who for certain reasons I will not more particularly indicate. John's share in it was that of the candid friend, who made the most of the story and enjoyed the talk which was made over the escapade of his friends. It is worthy of notice that at the time to which I allude an eight hour day had not yet been heard of, a fortnight's holiday was a thing unknown, and even a Saturday afternoon's leisure or the half-day we have now were things of the distant future. Business hours were early and late, not late and early as they are now. The pleasure of frequent visits to friends at a distance could rarely be enjoyed, and railways and modern means of conveyance were then only talked of.

The Rev. Mr Blair of Fisherton, a decent, genial old clergyman, paid his visit to Ayr every Tuesday, depending on a "lift" from one or other of his parishioners, who, like the Carrick farmer of the present day, drove into Ayr on the market day. Mr Blair had several friends in Ayr, with whom he enjoyed a chat on these Tuesdays, and with whom he transacted his family business, giving his orders and having his parcels carried out in the same parishioner's gig or dog-cart. He delighted in visitors coming to Fisherton Manse, who would certainly have visited him more frequently if business claims had not taken up so much of their time and a means of conveyance been more easily obtained. Needless to say the Maidens and Turnberry Railway was not in evidence then, nor even, indeed, thought of. The four friends I allude to had frequently been invited to Fisherton Manse, but the only convenient day they could find was a Sunday, and the strict Calvinistic feeling of the period scarcely permitted of a visit on that day. The clergyman, however, was less rigid in his views than his lay friends, and he insisted on them paying him a visit on Sunday, promising them not only a good sermon but a good dinner and a pleasant day's relaxation. In the matter of Sabbath observance it was not considered much out of the way for a layman to do what a clergyman sanctioned, so next Sunday saw our friends in a dog-cart enjoying a pleasant drive along the Carrick shore to spend a day in the country, to worship in Fisherton Church ,and dine in Fisherton

Manse. It, however, did not end there. The unusual sight of four decent burghers driving on the Saubbath did not escape remark, and John M'Naught, who, with all his love of fun ,was rather strict in his view of the Fourth Commandment, probably was not sorry to see his friends called in question. They were members of Cathcart U.P. Church, Rev. Robt. Renwick being then the burning and shining light of the large congregation which worshipped there. Mr Henry C. Gray (of whom more anon) was a ruling elder, and being a godly man he deemed it his duty to draw the attention of the Kirk Session to this backsliding on the part of four of their members. He had been disturbed in his devotions on the Sunday morning by hearing a conveyance go past his door, and was still more disturbed by noticing who the occupants were. The affair could not be lightly passed over; minister and Session alike were scandalised, and communications were opened with the defaulters. Possibly the Fisherton sermon was not equal to the usual Cathcart Street Supply, or the dinner was only a manse dinner after all, and the day was not

> "The Sabbath well spent,
> Which brings a week of content,"

but three of the four repented of the evil they had done and made their peace with their ecclesiastical overseers, and were privately rebuked and restored. The fourth, however, probably thinking more of Fisherton hospitality and not being of such a pliable nature, was contumacious, and would not acknowledge any fault whatever. John M'Naught's love of fun was not proof against this. He was a Sabbatarian, of course, but he had a liking for pluck, and he did not hesitate to commend the more stubborn Sabbath breaker and to express his contempt for the weaklings who had thrown up the sponge at the prospect of a fight. Forgetting how he had blamed the transgressors, he now warmly encouraged the contumacious member who was willing to take off his coat to face the session. I must, however ,shorten the story. The delinquent had to attend a Session meeting, to be admonished; but he would accept of no admonition. He even, it is said, used stronger language than is usual in church courts, and snapped his fingers in the face of the minister and kirk session, with the result that there was one family less in the Cathcart Street membership, and with no difficulty whatever, there was one family more attending the Newton Parish Church, the pulpit of which was at that time occupied by the late Principal Caird. The change for that family was not an unpleasant one in

more ways than one, for just about a month afterwards it was announced that the Rev. Robert Renwick was about to marry his servant—his housekeeper—only he was rather late about it, as the marriage should have taken place a few months previous, with the result that after much fighting and wrangling in Church Courts the Rev. Robert Renwick became an ex-minister, and John M'Naught and his four friends were left to moralize on the relative importance of the Fourth and Seventh Commandments. It is only fair to add that while these anecdotes are told as giving illustrations of life in Ayr half a century ago, in this case it holds good regarding Sabbath observance. The other is quite exceptional, and a similar unpleasant clerical slip will not necessarily therefore be again recorded in these reminiscences.

In the matter known as Sabbath observance, the change from the middle of the nineteenth century to that of the beginning of the twentieth is somewhat remarkable. A drive along the Carrick shore was a terrible offence then. What would the Rev. Robert Renwick and his worthy elder, Mr Henry C. Gray, say now if they could visit Auld Ayr with its tramway cars running on Sunday, the Tea Gardens at Burns Monument (the attraction of the Banks of Doon), the milk carts—morning and evening—delivering the milk, which then had always to be obtained on Saturday nights, and even to hear the shouts of the newsboys selling the sporting papers on Sunday morning just brought in by the Sunday train, a thing then also unknown and never even contemplated? I am not moralising, I am only drawing attention to the serious change. The only alteration I can mention now of what existed then and is now abolished suggests progress in another direction is that public-houses were open on Sunday. Forbes Mackenzie only turned up later, leaving it to be supposed that the Sabbath observance then was more than doubtful, or at least that non-observance was more private than public.

CHAPTER II.

Auld Ayr Clergymen.

In giving the reminiscences of Ayr during the middle of last century, they would be far from complete if they did not contain many references to the clergymen who occupied the various pulpits in it at the time. I do not mean to draw any comparisons with the clergy of the present day. We will always have good and indifferent ministers in our midst, and I only qualify them as good or indifferent in all fairness; I cannot indicate any of them as being bad, but, certainly, as with the stars, they differ from each other in glory, and between then and now the differences are also great. My earliest recollections of the Ayr divines carry me back to the time of Dr Auld, the "Daddy Auld" of Burns' time, and Dr Peebles, of Newton, another who figured in Burns, had only departed this life, and Mr Stevenson was occupying his church. Drs Auld and Peebles had both seen their jubilee in their respective churches, the only two since that time who have been able to celebrate such an event being the late Mr Robertson, so recently among us, and Dr Dykes. At the time I refer to Drs Auld and Cuthill held the first and second charges in Ayr, but the other churches changed much more frequently. In Cathcart Street Church, Renwick, Morrison, and M'Ewan, had followed each other in rapid succession with almost as much regularity as in the case with the Wesleyans, who make it a point to have changes every three years. In other churches these changes were by no means so numerous; in many cases no change was desired. The wickedness of some people is great, however, and it is said that in certain congregations there was a feeling that some variety would not have been an unmixed blessing. If the people of those days were not particularly good, it was not for want of specially excellent preachers. There were Dr Dykes and Dr Robertson in the Ayr Established Churches, the Rev. Wm. Grant in Sandgate Free, Dr Knox in Wallacetown U.P. Church, Dr Grahame in what is now Martyrs' United Free, Rev. J. Rae (one of the finest elocutionists in the country) in Wallacetown Established, Rev. John Robertson (then in his prime) in the Original Secession Church, in addition to the galaxy in Newton Parish Church. No town of a similar size could boast of such a selection of eminent preachers within its bounds at the same period. As was remarked by Bailie Bone, a Newton Bailie—who will appear

in these reminiscences again—"'there was no place for selecting grand ministers like Ayr, especially Newton. They kept them only a short time, having to send them off in a hurry to turn them into Doctors, Professors, and Principals.'' Of the whole, distinguished though they all were, perhaps the most noteworthy were the ministers of Newton Parish Church. Within thirty years after the Disruption in 1843, there were no less than twelve clergymen elected to Newton Parish Church. Their names are worthy of being recorded in the order of their succession, viz.:— Brown, Caird, Stewart, Henderson, Boyd, Burns, Wallace, John M'Leod, Jamieson, Gunn, Thompson, and Peters. No church has ever had such a succession of distinguished men, whose names have all been more or less prominent since they left Newton. It is worthy of note that it is not many years since all of them were living; in point of fact, at one time there were fourteen living ministers who had been in charge of Newton. In addition to these well-known names I may add those of Dr M'Gregor of Edinburgh, the Rev. Roderick Lawson of Maybole, and Mr Glasgow of Coylton, all of whom were at one time assistants in the Parish.

There will always be the question which naturally arises in connection with the election of these distinguished ministers, whether it was "luck or guid guiding" which conduced to the fortunate selection? Bailie Bone—who has been already mentioned—contended, of course, that it was the good judgment of the Freemen, who were the patrons of the kirk, and who deserved the credit for such a wonderful success. The Newton Freemen annually elected thirteen of their number to be delegates, with full power to manage the church, and when a vacancy occurred to elect a minister, and as those thirteen had always been unanimous in their choice, seemingly they deserve the credit for their great decernment. Bailie Bone, who was the only one of their number who had any literary attainments whatever, doubtless had a fair claim to at least some credit for having guided them properly. I cannot help thinking, however, that the element of luck had some share in the success of the choice. One out of thirteen does not always command a majority, far less secure a unanimous following. The composition of the delegates was not such as gave them special claims to be considered excellent judges. They were simply a body of men in no way superior to the electorate—but only less in number—who have now the appointment and election of ministers, and to be so successful was really a matter of great surprise.

At all events it is said that this success was the reason for the form adopted, after the abolition of the Patronage Act, for the election of ministers. In framing that Act an impression existed that these thirteen delegates were elected by the congregation instead of from a limited body like the Freemen, and so in the popular mode of election now a committee of the congregation is first appointed for selecting a leet and practically controlling the election. Into the vexed question of whether we have a sensible mode of electing ministers now or not I will not enter. At all events the old Newton delegates—under Bailie Bone—must have had great good sense, if success indicates merit, for they did their duty well.

It may be interesting to know how this duty was performed. I have already mentioned that there was at least one of the delegates who was possessed of some literary attainments. They had also a very sensible old Town Clerk (Mr Thomas M'Cosh) who doubtless gave them valuable assistance, as he well could do; the rest of them were shopkeepers, weavers, carters, and men possessed of properties—small properties, of course—and doubtless as a ministerial election came round, they became men of more than ordinary importance. I am not aware that at any of their meetings they were honoured— or otherwise—by having a newspaper reporter present. Many meetings of less importance have had several newspapers represented, and the reports furnished were of much less interest than many of these could have been, for they were somewhat of the following type. Even although it was for the election of a minister—an important enough business—the usual routine was followed. The meetings were usually held at eight o'clock at night, ten minutes grace being allowed till all had assembled. The Clerk (Mr M'Cosh) was generally among the first to arrive. He at once turned out his "minute book," and commenced to take down the sederunt of the members as they entered the Council Room, and while they were taking their seats and discussing the weather and local topics, with any little bit of scandal which was going, for even then there were always little tit-bits of back-slidings and what "folks were saying," and were better relished if they were bad reports than if they were good. Mr M'Cosh was all the time leisurely writing out his minute of the night's proceedings, before even the proceedings had taken place. Little blanks were left here and there, though not very many, as space for an unforeseen motion taking effect, but I have known many minutes written and finished ready for the chairman's signature before the meeting was

actually constituted. When the members had all assembled and taken their seats, and the minutes were completed, the usual remark was made by the Senior Bailie, which was to this effect:—"Weel, I suppose ye a' ken the business we're after the night, and the clerk will see it put a'right in the meenutes, so we'll just go 'farther up,' and get a' settled." The meeting then adjourned and went "farther up," which meant to Skipper Cuthbert's, a well-known public-house, now known as "Turner's Brewery," and several years ago as D. B. Young's. I have no hesitation in saying that ten out of the twelve popular ministers of Newton Parish Church were actually elected in this public-house.

Whatever may be the thought now-a-days of such a mode of conducting business, and some will doubtless say it was most unseemly, the result was always a success. The refreshments were usually a pie—and pies were pies in those days—to each delegate, and jugs of beer accompanied the pies ad libitum—good home brewed sweet ale—for bitter beer was not then known, followed by whisky toddy, also ad libitum, and the meeting finally broke up at "elders' hour," which was then considered reasonable at 11 o'clock. These reminiscences are only given as faithful records of sayings and doings of the time, therefore I do not feel called upon to speak of them either in terms of commendation or of condemnation. Possibly, if a moralist, I might assume a virtue, though I had it not, and condemn the pies. I might even condemn the beer and the toddy, and condemn even the place of meeting, which was then a one-storey thatch-roofed edifice; but, to be candid, I cannot. I quite approve of the many changes which have taken place, and am quite willing now to approve of and even practice total abstinence, but he would have been a brave man who would then have done so. There was not one among the Freemen, during the whole period prior to the abolition of patronage, who thought of teetotalism; what they have been since does not come within the scope of these reminiscences. I remember once (not on the ordinary meeting night) visiting the "back room" where these meetings were held in company with one of the "illustrious twelve," who had been elected there, and who had expressed a desire to see the place where the Newton ecclesiastical powers at that time deliberated. I made no secret to him of the modus operandi, and the eating and drinking which accompanied the deliberations. He enjoyed it amazingly, and told me he could now understand and better appreciate the Noctes Ambrosiani of Christopher North, and see how closely allied were wisdom and folly.

The Newton Freemen never had a greater compliment paid them, and Bailie Bone appreciated it highly. To couple North and the Ettrick Shepherd with two Newton Bailies was either bringing two personages pretty well down or raising other two very well up. In any case, it has to be admitted that many meetings have been held where there have been no pies, but more impiety; no beer or toddy, but, judging from speech and behaviour, more symptoms of those present having taken too much of both, even though they had not; and meetings held in handsome chambers where there was much more bad fellowship displayed than under the thatch roof where the Newton Freemen held their social and business meetings.

This chapter, however, was to be more about the clergymen themselves than of those who elected them, and I am afraid my pen has run away with me. Still adhering to the Newton Kirk, I may mention it is all I can recollect of the Rev. J. Stevenson, the Newton minister who went out at the Disruption, that on the Sunday previous to his leaving the pulpit for the last time he preached a farewell sermon, and took as his text, "Ichabod! the glory is departed." Those who know of the time can easily imagine how such a text could be handled in the circumstances; and those who know the kirk now, at least externally and the entrance to it, which has been little improved since 1843, will rather enjoy the picture which the preacher drew in his peroration in driving home his text as specially applicable to Newton Church. "Yes, my dear Christian brethren," he said, "the words of the text come with great force to my mind as I think of this old building we are leaving. 'Ichabod, the glory is departed!' will soon be written on these old walls, cobwebs will be seen soon in every corner, decay and desolation will be visible on all around, and the grass will soon be growing green in that old porch," and almost in tears, and with great feeling, he fervently finished with—"Verily, we may well say, 'Ichabod, the glory is departed!'" When Mr Stevenson left the church he took with him almost the whole of the members and the whole of the Kirk Session with one exception. On the first Sunday after he left people stood at the various "close mouths" numbering the worshippers who entered. I forget now the exact number, but I think it was under forty, and it seemed the prophesy was to be fulfilled regarding "Ichabod." But such prophecies do not always turn out as is expected, for within a year or so the Newton Kirk was as well filled as ever, and ever since has remained the best-filled church of any denomination in Ayr. If cobwebs be

ever seen in its corners, it is from the carelessness of those who are supposed to keep the church clean; and no grass has ever been visible in the old porch. Any decay and desolation arises only from old age, for the old fabric should have been removed ere this and a much larger and more elegant church erected in its place, the large congregation fully justifying such a change. It is worthy of note also that even the minister who foretold the doom of the Auld Kirk forgot his own prophecy, for only a very few years afterwards he was preaching in his own new Church on the text, "Peace on earth, good-will to men," and finished up with a peroration about brethren dwelling in unity and the healing of all divisions. A quaint old elder named Murdoch, a watchmaker, made the remark to a fellow-elder on leaving church, "Aye! that's a change; Iccabocca's awa' noo."

Again I am induced to draw another comparison between 1843 and 1905. Then a whole congregation were practically turned out of their church—legally of course—and a handful only came to fill their place. The change was effected peaceably and in order. In 1905 another whole congregation also—legally of course—was turned out, and another handful took their place. Talk of Sabbath desecration! A howling mob—Christians, of course, fighting in a good cause—numbers overpowering a small minority, with law and police set at defiance. The comparison, however, may be left to speak for itself. The writer of reminiscences fifty years hence will have room for a picture here of a scene which is fresh in everyone's memory.

Following Mr Stevenson in Newton pulpit was Mr Brown ,who only remained about two years, but long enough to gather around him a large congregation, quite as large as the one which he had left. Mr Caird followed and ministered in Newton also for upwards of two years. The others followed in rapid succession, the delegates being called on to exercise their function on an average at least once every three years. At every ordination of a new minister the Freemen as heritors entertained the members of the Presbytery, with the newly-ordained minister and his friends, to dinner. I think it was the late genial old minister of Dalrymple I heard once remarking that he enjoyed as much hospitality from the Freemen of Newton as from all other heritors in Ayrshire put together. He had actually attended the "de'il's dozen" of ordination dinners given by the Freemen in the course of this succession of ministers. The triennial dinners formed a distinct change from the monthly meetings, where pies, beer, and toddy

only were in the ascendant. It is not to be supposed that attempts were not made to prevent those frequent changes. Some opposition was once raised to one leaving (I forget which) for Edinburgh, but it was urged in favour of the step that he was being removed to a greater sphere of usefulness. The Rev. Dr Walker, the aged minister of Ochiltree, resented this excuse by demanding to know from the deputation who were urging the change "if they thought that the souls of a number of Edinburgh lawyers were of more value in the eyes of the Lord than that of a wheen Newton weavers?" Evidently the Presbytery thought they were, for the plea of the "greater sphere" was accepted. If they had only urged the greater need of the "Edinburgh lawyers' souls," the plea would have had a better foundation.

In speaking of the wonderful success attending the selection of ministers by the Newton Freemen, one naturally will come to the conclusion that the delegates must have been a very wide awake body of men. It is remarkable that during their respective three years of ministry in that favoured parish not one of those selected ever returned to give voice to heterodox opinions, and even when all the churches around were at loggerheads as to subjects of innovations and changes of form of worship, Newton Parish remains terribly conservative, not liberal even, but in the sternest unchangeable sense of the word, sitting during singing, standing at prayers, and not having even a church choir. The form of worship and the place of worship were alike plain and practical. It was good in 1776 when the church was built, and seemingly it was to stand unchanged till 1876, the full 100 years, and it very nearly did so. The delegates occupied the front row of the gallery, and to give them due credit they were very regular in their attendance. Seldom were there less in attendance than nine out of the thirteen. The attendance was regular; the attention was not so great. To give them their due, I never knew a better body of sleepers in my life. Sitting at the singing they could scarcely sleep then, and standing during the prayers sleep was almost impossible; but during the sermon, which at that time was never less than thirty minutes, there was a fair chance of a good sleep, and it was fully taken advantage of. They had evidently the fullest confidence in all the ministers being orthodox, so there was no need of watchfulness in that respect. It was after they left Newton and got contaminated with the broader views which existed in city life, and much more common in city character, that the Newton ministers deviated from the more rigid doctrines of the Confession of Faith, and required, and in some cases did

receive the attention of their Presbyteries. Probably there were more watchful eyes and ears then to detect any lapse; at all events, the evangelical but sleepy headed Freemen of Newton never had cause for inquiry. Sound sleepers they were, and though the weakness could not, and did not, escape the notice of the preachers, there was never an open rebuke. In private, of course, I know it was often spoken of by them, but then it was more jokingly referred to than in any seriousness. I remember at one time Dr Burns making a remark in company when mention was made of the nine sleepers who sat regularly before him. He most humorously described the different positions of the sleepers. One sank his chin deep into his breast, where it rested very comfortably; another varied the position frequently, sometimes the one cheek on one shoulder, the other cheek getting its turn on the other shoulder, as the discourse proceeded; another put his head down decently and slept right through; while another would keep nodding, or rather bowing, most reverently, as if in approval of each point which was made in the sermon. This Bailie, be it remarked, had a large, fully-shaved open face, with a bald head, and as he bowed his head diligently over the front of the gallery, Dr Burns remarked that it reminded him of a cow scratching her neck over a gate. Some kind friend of course was good enough to tell the Bailie this, and though previous to that time he often expressed his belief that Burns was the best wee preacher ever they had in Newton, it was noticed afterwards that he always spoke of him as "a d—— wee cat." As a further illustration of the sleepers, I may remark that by some sort of private arrangement, they all awoke simultaneously at the close of the sermon and drew a deep breath as if they had been listening most intently the whole time. One day a strange clergyman occupied the pulpit, whose peculiarity seemed to consist of making a long pause at the close of every head of his discourse. This was so noticeable that many of the congregation thought he had actually finished. The effect on one of the Bailies at all events was ludicrous. The stranger wishing to extract an opinion from this Bailie —one of the renowned judges of preaching as exampled by the Newtonian selections—he asked if he liked his discussion. "No ava," was the candid response, "you wakened me four or five times."

I remember well my promotion to the office of delegate, and of course this promotion meant a seat with the sleepers in the front of the gallery. No doubt the pride of being in such an exalted position in such dignified company was a powerful antidote to somnolence; at all events for a con-

siderable time I did not sleep. It was at this time that considerable differences existed in the churches as to certain innovations. Presbyterianism was leaving behind it the cut and dry unattractive form which had been adhered to so long, and in many congregations attempts were being made towards a more ornate service: standing at singing, and sitting during the prayers, introducing harmoniums, and otherwise making church attendance more attractive. There was some feeling regarding this "innovation;" but it was remarked by the delegates, who cared for none of these things: "Gae us gude preaching, and we'll no fash wi' these fal-derals." Dr Dykes meeting Bailie Bone in the street one day, after exchanging civilities with the usual remark as to the weather, the Doctor said to the Bailie:

"By the way, Bailie, have you nothing new about Newton just now?"

"No," replied the Bailie, "there is nothing stirring."

"Indeed!" said the Doctor. "Have you no change? No innovations, such as are spoken of elsewhere?"

"No, no!" replied the Bailie; "we have none of them in Newton."

"I'm surprised," responded the Doctor slyly. "I thought Newton would be among the first even in these matters."

"Oh! by the way," said the Bailie, bethinking himself, "we have an innovation after all, which I forgot, when you remind of these."

The Doctor, in an instant, was all attention. "What innovation is this?"

"Oh!" said the Bailie, "we have got a new delegate, and he wont sleep like the rest o' us."

Here was a further remark of high honour for me. It was something to be exalted to become a delegate, but it was better to become distinguished as somewhat different from the rest, in that I would not sleep in church. I may as well add, however, that since that time I have lapsed; I can sleep now as well as any of them. In kirks and trains it requires an effort to keep awake. At all events I dare not attempt an afternoon service, being only able to keep awake in the forenoon, while in train the other morning I was asleep before I reached Troon.

I have heard comparisons made in connection with those different ministers. Many of the old parishioners speak of their favourites; but that is only a matter of liking. There can be really no comparison drawn between any of them. Bailie Smith might have had an extra admiration for Dr Burns, changed, of course, when he heard of his

amusing comparison between himself and the coo. We can well imagine many also having a great liking for the well-known A. K. H. Boyd or the even more able and amiable Dr Stewart; while the more hard-headed will give a decided preference to Dr Wallace. But all had their admirers, an admiration fully justified by the high position they all filled in the Church afterwards. I think, however, Principal Caird holds the premier position. I question if there are six or other names in the Church which could be considered his equal, far less his superior. Principal Caird was one whose eloquence, scholarship, and general attainments are only to be met with once in a generation. Dr Stewart, who followed him, was scarcely less gifted; he was not, however, endowed with such sturdy good health, which doubtless told rather against him. Dr John Macleod had all the well known ability of the Macleod family—if not the greatest, he certainly was not the least. Such a succession of ministers with so many different characteristics is not to be met with in the history of any church. Dr Wallace was the only one of whom it may be said he died before his full career was completed. To some extent he was unfortunate, and his sudden death closed a career which would have given him a position higher than any of the galaxy with which he was associated. He never had full justice awarded to him; it may have been his own fault. Circumstances, at all events, were against him sometimes, and withal none of those who came before him or after him had such a fund of humour, combined with strong good sense and the irresistible ability in pressing home an argument. Even in the pulpit his humour peeped slyly out. I remember at one time the Baptists were creating some stir in Newton, and as converts were being made there were public baptisms by immersion on the Newton shore. Dr Wallace preached a sermon on the subject in the church, taking for his text, the baptism of the Eunuch by Philip, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. He brushed aside the fact of there being much water at hand, and placed the weight of his argument in favour of sprinkling rather than immersion on the fact that after Phillip was caught away by the Spirit the Eunuch himself went on his way rejoicing. To be accurate, he thought the Eunuch would have gone away shivering, as was usually the case with the "dippers." In his public lectures he gave full vent to his humour. This was well illustrated in a lecture he gave on "Books: their use and abuse." There was a small public library in Newton at that time belonging to the church, consisting of upwards of a thousand volumes. The works on the shelves were mostly composed of theology,

biography, and history—very much theology indeed—but no fiction. The library was little taken advantage of, and Wallace thought an infusion of fiction would make it more attractive. In the rules, however, fiction was specially forbidden. To amend this rule, a meeting was called, at which the minister was to deliver a lecture on "Books: their use and abuse." The meeting was very poorly attended; indeed all who turned out were Mr Wallace himself, Mr M'Rae (the Session Clerk), the writer of these reminiscences, and another woman. The rule, however, was altered and a good infusion of novels was added to the library, while the delivery of the lecture was postponed. It was afterwards delivered to a considerable audience, Mr Wallace opening his lecture by explaining that it had been postponed on account of the limited audience which attended to hear it on a former occasion. He explained that the main object of that meeting was accomplished, being to amend one of the rules so as to secure the admission of novels into the library, and the audience was convulsed by his description of the meeting, which was to the effect that he had presided and the momentous motion had been proposed by one, seconded by another, and carried unanimously by the third, which composed the whole audience. Some may think the lecture from its subject, "Books: their use and abuse," would be dry and uninteresting. In Wallace's hands it was, however, from beginning to end brimful of humour, and from first to last his audience, starting with the unanimity of the three who supported the introduction of fiction, were kept laughing till its close.

My recollection of the lecture was refreshed a few years afterwards at a meeting of the Young Men's Association, held in the Session House of the Ayr Sandgate Free Church, presided over by the Rev. William Grant, when a young man served it up to us again as an original essay on "Books." With a few really original sentences at the beginning and a few at the close, the essay was a fair representation of the lecture. Everyone enjoyed it, and the mirth over its delivery was immense. In this case, however, its origin was more at the audacity than the humour of the essayist in palming off as original, allusions to Homer, Virgil, Socrates, and others, of whom it would have been a stretch of the imagination to believe the essayist knew anything whatever.

CHAPTER III.

Ministerial Gossip.

I hope I am not encroaching too far on the patience of my readers in devoting another chapter of my Reminiscences to matters principally connected with the Clergy of my younger days. Perhaps the subject is of more interest to myself than my readers, and gossip, even concerning bygone days, while pleasing to me may not be much appreciated by others. I can only hope to please some, for in any case nothing is more difficult than to please all; and the class I am writing about will, I have no doubt, have found that out in their own experience, and with a greater right to complain than I have. I cannot, however, resist an inclination to give another chapter partly on Kirk matters, in order to give my clerical reminiscences some degree of completeness, after which I will hurry on, for it is not from want of matter that my narrative takes the form of "linked sweetness long drawn out." I have a long array of other subjects to deal with. Lawyers, doctors, schoolmasters, Imperial and municipal politicians, and last, but not least, provosts and bailies, and I will try to make the matter as readable as possible.

I remember a strange minister once officiating in Newton Kirk giving what I have no doubt was one of his best sermons, for if ministers when they go from home don't take their best sermons with them I think they are to blame. It may be also that it is their best sermons they preach over again in their own pulpits, only they forget to improve them by abridging them. There are few sermons which could not be improved and made more effective, by a curtailment which would leave all the good in them and throw out what causes a weariness to the flesh, and thus prevent the evident inattention which characterises many congregations. It is a pity that ministers will not remember that what was a moderate length many years ago is far too long now. I am afraid I am here preaching but not practising what I am insisting on, but I cannot resist retailing this little anecdote of the strange minister who was preaching a very fair discourse how that the day was warm, the church probably was not well ventilated, and the sermon was dreich a wee. He could not shut his eyes to the fact that many of his audience were asleep, and many were listless, so in the middle of his discourse he paused a little, and said: "And now, my

friends, if you will just waken up, I'll shorten my discourse and endeavour to make it more interesting if possible." This did waken up the congregation and I saw few sleepers afterwards. But is the moral not plain enough? There was here an admission that hitherto he had not endeavoured to be as interesting as he possibly could; he now saw the necessity of shortening his discourse. Could he not also have foreseen the advantage of brevity before the infliction of the long drawn out "oft-told story?" And was he not both in duty and in honour bound to endeavour from the outset to make it as interesting as posible? There was evidently a repentance on his part of a transgression which many, I think, have good reason to imitate. It does not seem to be a godly repentance which needeth not to be repented of, for short, concise sermons are still the exception to a rule which nine-tenths of every congregation abominate.

I will, however, endeavour to make this chapter short and interesting, not taking, however, so much guilt to myself as the preacher of long sermons. A long chapter in a paper is not on a par with a long sermon in the pulpit. In the paper you can skip over many of the sentences which can be well spared, but in the church you are a prisoner and must endure; or, at least, whether you listen or not you have to wait till the "finally," and "in conclusion," and "one word more," which too often yet characterise what have to pass as modern sermons. But though there is yet room for improvement in the length of church services, we should be thankful in the beginning of the twentieth century for the great improvement which has taken place since the middle of the nineteenth. Even then it was considered an improvement on half a century previous, at which time it must have been a terrible weariness to the flesh. There must be, I admit, some use and wont in this "dreichness," for we read that, even in Paul's time, the Apostle himself was somewhat long-winded, so much so, that on one occasion one young man's power of endurance gave way, and, having fallen asleep after I don't know what period of infliction, he fell from a considerable height, and only by a miracle was not killed outright. The age of miracles is past, however, and we have few preachers who come near to St. Paul in "making things interesting," so that my contention in favour of short sermons holds good as being in every way safe and popular. Fifty or sixty years ago the average length of the service was about an hour and fifty minutes, which became gradually lessened till it became the hour and a

half. Great fear, however, existed regarding strangers, who often come on special occasions, and whose discourses were of a special length. This always tended to make us content with the ills we had and prevented us flying to those we knew not of; and it frequently happened that when it was known that a stranger was to occupy the pulpit, many found it convenient to have a day off, and I feel satisfied that the special object of these strangers' visits was defeated by the long time they took to impress it on their hearers. If it was to extract a special collection, I feel satisfied the contributions would not be increased but rather otherwise by the increased length of the appeal. Various were the excuses made to escape these ordeals, as they were considered. I remember on one occasion being unavoidably brought into one of them, and I listened for a considerable time to a sermon which was evidently to exceed an hour in length. I had endured about three-quarters of an hour of it, when I hit upon an expedient to be relieved of the remainder. I had a youngster with me, who was as tired of it as I was, to whom I whispered, "Would you like to go out?" To this question I had a glad assent, if I would go with him! We went; I receiving much sympathy from the congregation for my kindness in going out with the youngster, which it must be admitted was sympathy misplaced, unless such mild hypocrisy is at all commendable. Many I know would have liked to have had youngsters to give them an excuse to go out as well.

It is a very rare thing, however, for members to leave the church during service, even when anything offensive or of an inordinate length is said, which might justify such leave-taking even with a hypocritical excuse. The only instance I remember was in Newton Church one Sunday shortly after the introduction of a new minister. He had just reached the middle of his sermon when the fire bell was heard, and at once two or three seized their hats and made their exit. Others followed, and as the fire bell continued, though indistinctly heard, with the usual short intermission, it seemed that in a very short time at least all the male part of the congregation would have left, even some of the more strong-minded, or rather anxious, females accompanying them. The minister was in a deplorable state. He had no idea of the cause of the stampede. He was racking his mind to make out what was the meaning of it. The cause was to him a mystery. He knew he had been preaching sound doctrine, and he had been tramping on no one's corns that he could think of. One or two

of the sedate delegates, even, had been awakened, and rose solemnly and walked out. Relief, however, came to the minister when Mr William Mills, an old elder, rose from his seat and walked most decorously up the pulpit stairs and whispered to the minister the cause of the commotion. Needless to say the benediction was at once pronounced, and the congregation dismissed in time to learn that a bakehouse was on fire and had been promptly extinguished before the church people got near it to see what damage was done. It contributed, however, at least to make for us one short sermon.

THE TWO SIDES OF THE RIVER.

Sixty years ago there existed a pretty strong feeling of antagonism between the two sides of the river. The "toon" and the "Newton" were looked upon pretty much as two distinct localities. School boys took up the quarrel and often indulged in stone fights, quite as unpleasant as they were unprofitable. It was singular, however, that this devotion to locality did not extend to church membership, for then, as now, many people crossed the bridges from both sides to churches on the other side to that in which they dwelt. Still there was rivalry even in the churches, and for what reason, seeing that all now are united in one burgh, cannot well be imagined. To illustrate this, an amusing story may be told of the time when Drs Auld and Peebles occupied the pulpits respectively of Ayr and Newton. A pawkie humourist of the "Edie Ochiltree" stamp—a warm partisan of Newton and its then minister—met Dr Auld, who knew him well, one day in the High Street, and entered into conversation with him. The following is the substance of the dialogue:—

Doctor Auld—"Weel, Rab, and how are you to-day?"

Rab—"No weel at a', Doctor."

Doctor—"Indeed! what's wrong, Rab?"

Rab—"Oh! I had an awfu' dream last night."

Doctor—"But what about dreams, Rab? Ye ken they aye go by contrary."

Rab—"Ah! but I'm no sae sure o' that, Doctor."

Doctor—"Weel, tell me your dream, Rab. I'll maybe interpret it for ye."

Rab—"Oh! it was terrible, Doctor. Ye maun ken I dreamed I wis deid, an' I ga'ed awa' up tae Heeven an' rappit at the gate o' the Celestial City to get in, when St Peter cam' tae me an' askit me whaur I cam' frae. I tel't him I cam' frae the guid toun o' Ayr. 'Gang awa'

doon bye,' said he. 'There's naebody comes frae Ayr tae here noo. There hasna been a leevin' soul frae Ayr here this last forty-three years.' (This was the time the Doctor had been minister of Ayr.) Dear me, Doctor, I was thunnerstruck; but recollectin' mysel' I says: 'Ah! but Peter, I forgot I cam' frae Newton, an' I sit under that godly man, Doctor Peebles.' 'Oh!' says Peter, with a pleased expression on his face, 'that's a very different thing; there's plenty comes frae Newton. You're a' right, come awa' ben' Oh! but Doctor, I was awfully relieved, but awfu' concerned aboot you an' my Ayr friends."

I don't know how the Doctor took it nor how he interpreted the dream, but I don't think Rab got the customary penny from him on that occasion.

OLD STORIES RENOVATED.

I am afraid this story is the foundation of a number of other dreams which are told of Heaven and St Peter keeping the gate to keep out certain folks. It has a little resemblance to one told by Sir Henry Irving and Toole, the actors, who were great friends, but did not miss a chance on occasions of having a joke at each other's expense. It is told of them that in a company one evening Toole was bent on taking Sir Henry down a bit, so he told of a similar dream he had to this effect. Toole also had dreamed, like Rab, that he had died, and gone up and asked St Peter for admission, but was refused, and was told that "no actors were admitted there." He turned and was going downwards when he met Sir Henry going up, and he waited, as he said, to see Sir Henry's face when he too was refused. To his surprise, however, Sir Henry was admitted without difficulty; so Toole went back and again asked admittance.

"I told you already," said Peter, "we admit no actors here."

"But," remonstrated Toole, "you have just let Irving in!"

"What about that," said Peter, "he's no actor, and never was one."

It was difficult for Irving to find a retort to equal this, so the comedian came off a good first over Sir Henry.

Another similar story is told, not at all in favour of lawyers in this case. I won't mention names. A decent old body who was gifted with some humour, but who had been most unfortunate in several law pleas and so entertained a grudge against the profession, met a somewhat

pompous lawyer on the street, who in a sort of patronising manner accosted him—

"Well, John, how are you to-day?"

"No' weel at a', Mr ——"

"What's wrong? Nothing serious, I hope?"

"No! only a terrible dream last night."

"Never mind dreams, John."

"Ah! but this was a terrible one."

"Tell me your dream, John; it must have been a serious one to affect you so much."

"Weel, ye ken, Mr ——, I dreamt I was dead, and very much to my surprise I was sent down below. I thought many a one worse than me had been sent elsewhere, but I thought I would just make the best o't; and to do that I would speak to Auld Satan fair, and put in a word with him to gie me one of the coolest places he had in his warm abode. So I got speech wi' him, and told him I had not been very bad when I was abune, and he might be canny wi' me noo. He said he would, and would gie me my choice of the most comfortable quarters he had. So he took me over the whole of the infernal regions, and I can tell ye, they are nae better than they are ca'd. One place is just hotter than another. There was a gie hot quarter fu' o' hypocrates and liars—there were a guid wheen ministers and elders there. Then there was another place just as bad, where there were a lot o' grocers that gaed light weight, and drapers that gaed short measure, butchers and fishmongers barely honest, and publicans that had added too much water tae their drink. There was a hotter place still, where there were a great lot of adulterers and fornacaters—they were weel baisted, and I saw some there I didna expect tae see. There were other places with different characters in them, and a' had different degrees of punishment. My greatest surprise, I confess, Mr ——, was that I saw nae lawyers there!"

"Ah!" said Mr ——, "ye need not hae been surprised at that. Although we lawyers are not much respected in this world, John, we hae justice done to us in the next. Na! na! Mr——, yere wrang, says John, for when I told Auld Satan I was surprised at seeing nae lawyers in his abode, he said, 'Oh, ay! we keep them separate'; and he took and showed me the biggest and the hottest place in his whole dominion—enclosed, with a strong gate on it. I took a peep through the gate, and it was as big as a' the other places put together, and choke fu' o' lawyers. I asked Satan why he did not let them go loose like the rest of his subjects. 'What!" he said in a tone

of surprise, 'let them gang loose here? It's no likely, the place WAD NAE BE worth living in if they got goin' about!' What dae ye think o' that, Mr ——?" The lawyer made a hasty departure.

There are numerous other stories told of a similar nature, current at the present day as new, and quite of modern date and application. I cannot help thinking, the best of them are old tales modernised like the Newton one I have told you of Rab and Dr Auld in favour of Newton. It is said there is nothing new under the sun, and probably Rab's pawky humour of eighty years ago was not even original then; at all events, there are many of the stories which will be interspersed through these reminiscences of fifty or sixty years ago which have been of recent years dressed up and passed off as new, and even of this century. I recently noticed two of them very slightly altered in "Tit Bits," having been sent there as original, and paid for at the rate of a guinea a column. Many of these stories, with which I intend to illustrate these reminiscences, will I hope be none the worse, though by giving them here the modern plagiarist is deprived of his claim to originality, seeing they are connected with individuals of a generation now fast disappearing.

To return, however, to my subject, from which anecdotage has somewhat carried me away, I think it worthy of remark that the feeling which existed between the Auld Toon and Newton has now quite disappeared. Ayr, Newton, and Wallacetown are now practically one, even the old landmarks as regards Municipal representation have disappeared, and from an ecclesiastical point of view the Church feelings are much altered. Members of all denominations will probably be found in both places in the next world, and the other side be awarded no predominance. I have yet in another chapter to notice other churches, for Newton has by no means a monopoly; and I may mention here the entire disappearance of much of the sectarian feeling which characterised the Disruption times, to which my reminiscences will be very much confined. I may remark, however, that the recent union of the Free and U.P. Churches has not contributed as much as was expected to the removal of that objectionable feeling of sectarianism. It has been felt by many that the union now effected might have still been delayed a few years and a much greater and more satisfactory union effected, which would have been more gratifying in its results. There exists in reality no reason why a union of the whole Presbyterian churches might not be effected. IF the differences

between the Frees and the U.P's have really been overcome, the differences between them and the other Presbyterian churches might easily be made to disappear. Much has been done within the past fifty years to effect this, both by parsons and people, and very little more is required to complete it. Seeing that I am confined in these Notes to incidents of at least fifty years ago, I am not called upon to notice any of the present clergymen of Ayr, although if it had come within my scope I could have done so with pleasure and generally in terms of the warmest approval, and with the highest respect to all. There is only one still living who must necessarily be noticed, and which I do with the greatest pleasure, Dr Dykes.

DR. DYKES,

has now passed his jubilee, but even in his case for obvious reasons I cannot do so with that freedom which can be used regarding those who have gone before. Dr Dykes has done much in his long ministry to tone down sectarian feeling. No such feeling can exist now as was somewhat pronounced when he came to Ayr. So far from the same jealousy existing the feeling towards him in other churches is more of envy that he is naturally so much confined to his own charge, and that all have not an equal claim to him. He occupies the happy postition of one against whom "no one can say a word if they would, and no one would say a word if they could." He has had the honour of declining the moderatorship of the General Assembly, and locally he may be considered the unmitred bishop of the extended burgh. The hold he has on the general respect of the whole community is scarcely equalled by any other lay or clerical member of it, and there is every appearance, as there is every wish, that a diamond jubilee may be looked forward to. It has been, I hope, his good fortune, as well as that of his parishioners, that he has remained a link between the clergy of half a century ago and the present day, and it is well now that the rage for carrying off our best ministers to "spheres of more extended usefulness," that was common long ago, has now almost ceased. On the celebration of his jubilee the Presbytery, the congregation, both old and new church, the ministers of all denominations, and a number of friends paid the Doctor all honour, and among other tokens of regard and respect presented him with his portrait. I cannot resist giving part of his speech on acknowledging the presentation, not only because it is characteristic, but as bearing

upon my reminiscences, and illustrates the changes in the past 50 years. It is taken from the report of the meeting which appeared in the local papers. He said:—"I was licensed to preach in 1853. Shortly after obtaining license I was asked by the late Dr Norman Macleod, of the Barony, Glasgow, to take charge of a mission in his parish. I was only too pleased to serve under so distinguished a minister, and willingly accepted his invitation. It was my intention to remain for some time at this post, as I was gaining excellent experience, and the mission prospered much better than seemed likely at first. But it is the unexpected that happens. An event occurred which entirely altered the course of my ministerial life. One Saturday, when I was busy preparing for my next day's work, a stranger came to see me, who introduced himself as Mr Shaw, the then minister of the first charge of Ayr. He told me what I was quite ignorant of, that the second charge of Ayr was vacant. He further told me that he and the kirk session were in a position of great difficulty, arising from the fact that the preacher who had been expected to take the services next day was snowed-up in Aberdeenshire, and could not possibly get through in time. Mr Shaw asked me if I could relieve them in their dilemma by coming down to Ayr, and taking the services which the snowed-up preacher was to have performed. Fortunately for myself I was able to arrange for this, and next day I officiated in the morning in the New Church, and in the afternoon in the Old. The result was that the committee who were entrusted with the nomination of a minister to the second charge intimated to me that they would recommend that I should be appointed. (Applause.) Or rather they said that they would do so if I could remove an objection which had been made to me. That objection may surprise you in view of my subsequent history. It was this: that I seemed to be a man in extremely delicate health, and that I would probably break down under the strain of the work. I had actually to produce medical evidence that I was physically sound. (Laughter.) At the same time there must have been something in my appearance suggestive of delicacy; for one of the door-keepers of the Old Church, a kindly old woman, took me aside shortly after I was appointed, and told me that I must be careful of myself, for it was evident that I had been "growing ower fast." (Laughter.) One of the senior members of Presbytery took a more encouraging view of my case. He said to me, "You are very thin and rather pale, but you should remember for your comfort that in Pharaoh's dream the lean kine came off best, for they eat

up the fat ones." (Laughter.) He has turned out, in a sense, a true prophet. Not that I ever eat up, or had any desire to eat up, anybody (laughter) but I have survived a great many who seemed much more robust and full of health than I did. I have great cause to be thankful to Almighty God that during my fifty years ministry I have never had a serious illness, and I have never been absent from my work, so far as I can recollect, for quite three months at one time. It seems very strange that it was owing to a snow-storm in Aberdeenshire that I came here at all; and that but for that event the course of my life would, so far as one can see, have flowed in some other direction. If you look back into your own lives you will see that it was often the influence of some apparently fortuitous cause which determined your future history, and the lesson from it all is that our life and work in the world are appointed by a Providence wiser and mightier than we are. The two churches, as I remember them, were very different from what they are now. The Old Church, which has this year reached the two hundred and fiftieth year of its existence, was, as I first knew it fifty years ago, very picturesque and interesting, but it was in a rough and uncomfortable state. There was no flooring in the area, the pews resting on the earth, with foot boards in front to enable the sitters to keep their feet off the ground. Even the galleries were only partially floored. The old wooden ceiling had become so defective and unsightly that it had been covered over with canvass; but this only made matters worse, for the canvass had in places given way. In short, the church was then very much in the same condition as nearly all the old churches in Scotland were at that period —sadly in need of repair and improvement. As to the New Church, it had not of course the historical interest of the Old. The interior was bare and unattractive, and, worst of all, it was exceedingly empty. An old gentleman told me, about the time I came here, that he and his family had attended the New Church, but had left it because there was such a small congregation. (Laughter.) On my saying to him that this did not seem a sufficient ground for leaving the church, he said, "O yes, but then, you see, we sometimes went to church late after the service had begun." (Laughter.) I need not say to you that within the last twenty or thirty years the congregations of both churches have spent a great deal of money in church improvement with excellent results; and that now, instead of there being too much accommodation for sitters, the difficulty for a considerable time has been that there is too little."

After all it is well to have a settled ministry, and Ayr itself in its increasing state may well be looked upon as an extending—if not extended—sphere of usefulness, and while it is with pride we think of the many distinguished ministers who have left us, still it is well we should now try to keep those we have. The neighbourhood as well as Ayr and Newton contributed their quota of removals to greater spheres, as we have illustrations in the person of Professor Charteris and Dr M'Adam Muir; and in the list I had almost neglected Dr Macgregor of Edinburgh, who was at one time assistant in Newton as the better half of Dr Burns when he occupied Newton pulpit. This also reminds me of Mr Roderick Lawson, at one time better half in the same way to Dr John Macleod. This, however, suggests another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Distinguished Assistants.

If at the time I write of Ayr had a pre-eminence in having distinguished ministers, it may be added that as like draws to like these had also distinguished assistants. Dr Macadam Muir was assistant to Dr Lawrie of Monkton. Professor Charteris was then also an assistant minister in St Quivox; the Rev. James Glasgow, for many years minister of Coylton, whose death took place only a short time ago, was also an assistant in Newton for some time; Dr M'Gregor, of Edinburgh, was assistant to Dr Burns in Newton; and Mr Roderick Lawson, afterwards minister of West Church, Maybole, was assistant to Dr John M'Leod. It will run hard with Newton if it holds good the assertion that to whom much is given, much will be required. Few parishes have had more in the way of excellent ministers than Newton, and I cannot say and I hope I say it in all humility there does not seem to have been a great return for it. To be candid, the congregation of Newton Parish Church is about the largest in Ayr, and if not what may be called a wealthy congregation it can be compared favourably with others in that respect. A good many of the members are well to do, and if they gave in proportion to their means I have no hesitation in saying they would easily double all their present givings and be by no means straightened. There are a few exceptions, of course, such as men with large families whose contributions may well be limited, but these do not make up for the great number who could, but don't give; in fact, I may say there are some who practically give nothing. I know of congregations who would ere this in similar circumstances have pulled down the present church—aye, and steeple too—and rebuilt it to partake more of the nature of a modern church, bringing it right out to the corner, capping it with a tower, and with a mission hall, vestry, etc., behind it. This, however, is the beginning of the twentieth century, and any reflection on what should be done may be held over. I am only concerned at present with the middle of the nineteenth century, and the present buildings only serve, while they remain standing, to give us a picture of what has been in existence for the past hundred years. Might I suggest that if the old building is to be kept standing as a memorial of antiquity it might be covered with ivy to give it at least a DECENT venerable appearance which it has not at present. To revert to

Dr MacGregor,

who had a short stay in Newton. He was, as a Newton worthy once called him, "a grand wee preacher," a characteristic he has maintained during the whole of a long and useful career. It may be mentioned that he was indeed personally "wee"; perhaps, not unlike one even more celebrated, his speech was much more to be respected than his personal appearance. He was somewhat lame also, and it is told of him that he once overheard some one saying, "there goes the lame minister." He turned smartly round and said, "I beg your pardon; I may be a lame man, but for a lame minister that is a matter of opinion." (This also is one of the little anecdotes which has done duty frequently since that day, and been applied to other ministers.) Needless to say he was quite as popular as Dr Burns, his superior in the charge of Newton, who, however, delighted to call him his colleague. It was Dr John MacLeod who always insisted on calling his assistant, Mr Roderick Lawson, his "better half." Dr Macgregor was removed from Newton to Paisley, and afterwards to Edinburgh. It is told of him in Paisley that when visiting the members of his congregation once, in a certain house he found the heads of the family out, only a smart little boy being in possession of the home. The lad, in the way of entertaining his visitor, took him out to the garden—or back door—to show him a fine litter of pigs, of which the family were the proud owners. He was very much interested in the litter, and he thought the minister should be the same. The litter was a good big one, but among them was a very small, brisk little pig, whom the wee fellow told the minister was called "Wee Macgregor o' the Hee." (This was the High Kirk where the Doctor officiated.) On asking the boy why he gave him this name, "Oh!" said he, "it is because he can bate a' the rest." The boy, doubtless, was a very good judge. Of the other assistants I have mentioned, the

Rev. Roderick Lawson

left Newton-on-Ayr for the West Parish of Maybole, where for many years he gathered together a large and devoted congregation. In many ways he was distinguished, and, if he did not reach the high position which many hailing from the same quarter did, he stands almost alone in many respects. He showed his confidence in himself, and in his congregation too, by abolishing seat rents in his church,

and relying entirely on the free-will offerings of his people for all his emoluments; and I think he also stands alone among his brethren in having resigned his charge when he felt the weight of years coming, and declining to accept any retiring allowance. If there have been any similar retirements in my time, I have not heard of them. The same energy which characterised him through his whole career was manifested at Newton. He was a admirable platform speaker at soirees, being brimful of humour. When in Newton he established a Young Men's Association, similar to that presided over by the Rev. Wm. Grant in Sandgate Free Church. He was president and the mainstay of its life. The weekly meeting of the association consisted of debates, essays read by the members, and what was known as "the magazine." This consisted of anonymous contributions sent in by the members and read out by the editor, and afterwards criticised by the members. This enabled a member to send in a contribution, and, not being known as the author, he could rise and give it a vigorous criticism, and so obtain credit for being a ready speaker and able to speak on the spur of the moment in a vigorous, slashing style. The president, Mr Lawson, frequently gave in essays, the substance of which I have seen occasionally reproduced in the numerous works he has since published. While inviting criticism of his own essays, few members ventured to have a fling at him, knowing full well his powers of retaliation. Only on one occasion do I remember a humble member crossing swords with him, and Mr Lawson decidedly came off second best, though it was to his own amusement as well as that of the other members. On the night in question Mr Lawson gave an essay, or rather a lecture, on Newton. He was a native of Girvan, but had connections in Newton, and knew it well. In the course of his essay he told us that he had travelled a good deal. He had been in many places in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He had even crossed the English Channel and visited several places on the Continent; but in all his travels he had never come across a piece of architecture on the same lines as, or to be compared to, the Newton Steeple. This, of course, amused his audience considerably. In the short discussion which followed the address, several members made remarks, all, of course, of a complimentary nature, as was to be expected, regarding their respected chairman. A Newtonian, however, not a ready speaker, and very nervous, but with a strong regard for his own native parish, and even some regard for its steeple, such as it was, also contributed his quota to the discussion,

and in halting tones, and with some stuttering managed to get out something like the following in its defence. He commenced with one or two sentences, complimentary to Mr Lawson personally and in praise of the address, but qualified that by saying that, unlike the chairman, he had not travelled very far. He had never been on the Continent, nor visited so many places as the reverend gentleman; in fact he had never been out of Scotland. He had visited Irvine and Cumnock, besides Prestwick and Whitletts. He had also visited Girvan (here he made a pause) and he had seen a steeple there. This evoked a burst of laughter, which was joined in by Mr Lawson, who admitted that in all his travels, looking for a worse steeple than the Newton spire, he had forgotton all about the steeple in his native place. At that time it would have been difficult to have said whether Newton or Girvan would have carried off the palm for its steeple, for the Girvan steeple then had not undergone the alterations and improvements which have been made on it. Newton Steeple remains as it was when it was built; only, age has not improved it, and as it stands at present it is more discreditable than ever. The modest critic, however, had "struck ile," and given an illustration that in going abroad looking for anything remarkable, we are apt to neglect things at our own door quite as noteworthy. The members of that association are now scattered far and wide, but any survivors still retain as vivid a recollection of the Newton assistant as they do of those who were their acknowledged "better halfs."

I cannot help lingering over these reminiscences in connection with Newton Kirk and their famous ministers and assistants. They were all noteworthy, but possibly Dr Burns, though perhaps least in bodily size, left a greater impression behind him than any. Possibly this arose from his sprightly manner and social habits, his general good nature, and the interest he took in the young men of his congregation, as much as his oratory in the pulpit. While these reminiscences were appearing in the press a correspondent sent me the following story about the Doctor, told by himself at a dinner party in Glasgow, and repeated by one of the hearers of it to the writer. While Burns shone in the pulpit, he more than shone at dinner parties, particularly after the ladies had retired to the drawing-room and the gentlemen remained for their quiet crack! extra nips, with their legs well stretched beneath the mahogany. These were Burns' supreme and happy moments; then he not only shone, but scintillated, entrancing his hearers by his stories—the most attractive being those of his own ex-

periences. The following is the one my acquaintance repeated as he heard it from Burns' lips. At college, as is well known, Burns was a brilliant, but nervous student. That nervousness stuck to him, as it does to almost all divines, more or less throughout life. He was licensed to preach at a very early age. There was no student preaching, by way of training, in those days. To make his maiden effort, Burns selected an out of the way parish down the Clyde where he was certain no one knew him, and this knowledge, he thought, would strengthen him. It so happened that the beadle of the kirk was the oldest inhabitant of the parish, having seen more than one generation pass away, and, like most of them in the past, regarded himself as the most important person in the district. He snuffed, and kept the material loose in his waistcoat pocket. He knew a stranger was to preach that particular Sunday, but was more than surprised to see in Burns quite a boy in appearance enter the vestry. After the kirk bell had ceased calling the faithful flock to service, the beadle took up the books to the pulpit, returned and indicated to Burns that "a wis ready." Burns started to ascend, but on his way up the stairs the nervousness came on in full force, his legs shook and got feeble, and it was with difficulty he got to his seat. All this was carefully noted by the old beadle who closely followed to shut the pulpit door. After doing so, he coolly turned round, faced the congregation, put his fingers into his waistcoat pocket, and, with an air of superior contempt, first filled one nostril and then the other with a dose of his favourite mixture, then turning towards the pulpit he leaned over, patted Burns on the back, and whispered to him, "Speak oot, my wee bit laddie; speak oot, an' no gae a damn fur ane o' them." The effect was, Burns said, electrical, and his nervousness fled. He did speak out as perhaps he never did before or after, excepting when, freed from official duties, he was seated surrounded by leal friends with their legs well stretched below the mahogany!

There are many reminiscences which are appropriately narrated and might be extended to fill volumes and certainly cannot be condensed sufficiently to be done justice to in a platform speech or a newspaper article. What has been said or written regarding the Newton Kirk ministers for instance is very interesting, but there are many interesting subjects which if not necessarily left out are overlooked and forgotten or at least have to give place to others which may be more appropriate to mention. I cannot resist making mention of one feature connected with Newton Parish

which, if not of vital importance is interesting enough, and which, among others, deserves to be remembered. It may be known to many that the custom prevails and has prevailed for at least a century in connection with the PLACING of a minister that the first child baptised by the new minister is named after him. It will readily be imagined that during the time between the incumbency of the first minister of Newton (Dr Peebles), who nearly accomplished his full jubilee in the parish, and the present minister who has just celebrated his semi-jubilee, the numerous changes of ministers in Newton, each minister giving his name to the first child he baptised, have necessarily sent out into the world a number of Newtonians bearing honoured names which ought to have been as great a stimulus to make them better citizens as the heroic deeds of the Newtonians of old who followed Bruce to Bannockburn, and secured the liberty of Scotland AND the patrimony of the lands of Newton to forty-eight Barons who are now, however, very much reduced in numbers. I will not attempt to trace the succession of these Barons from the memorable fight near Stirling six centuries ago to those of the present day, but it would be much more easy and almost as interesting if we could trace the career of those of the last century to see if they have done honour to the names of their clerical godfathers, and see if Newton has gained fame not only from its distinguished ministers, but from the children named after them. I can only give authentic information regarding two of the baker's dozen who were thus baptised. Perhaps some correspondents will favour me with information regarding the others. Some "doubtless have risen high in life's changeful destiny," for Newtonians have the reputation of "rising with the lark in the morning." The first of the two I know of was baptised by the late Professor John Caird. Newtonians now in the sere and yellow leaf will remember Parker's Foundry in the Newton Green. A son of the respected owner of that foundry has carried through a fairly successful life the name of John Caird Parker. If he has not achieved the greatness which falls to the lot of some he has at least been highly prosperous among Glasgow merchants, and reflects credit on his native place and his name. Though not discarding his name he sometimes humorously allows it to be varied, and claims to be known as the GRATE Parker, seeing he carries on a very great business in grates. Leaving aside the pun, however, I may mention a remarkable incident connected with the life of Mr Parker and his illustrious god father. It is now many years since Professor John Caird baptised John

Caird Parker, sen., because there is now a John Caird Parker, jun., baptised, singular to relate, 50 years after the first, in Glasgow, also by Professor Caird, having on the same cap presented to the baby of sixty years ago by the Professor when performing the first baptism. I question if any clergyman in the Church of Scotland has had the same experience. The only other Newton minister's namesake I know of bears the name of George Stewart Burns Hendry. A good story regarding him deserves to be known. The incident has been frequently told by Dr Burns himself with great glee. To give it point I may mention that I am afraid Dr Burns had not been so generous to his namesake as his predecessor had been, and possibly not given the baby's baptismal cap which, as I have mentioned, had done duty twice. It seems, however, that Mrs Hendry was not altogether satisfied with the attention which George Stewart Burns, the minister, had bestowed on George Stewart Burns Hendry, and she took the opportunity one day when the minister was going up Peebles Street and young Hendry was playing about the door, in a voice distinctly heard by all. Speaking TO the child but AT the minister, she cried, "Come in the hoose, George Stewart Burns Hendry, or I'll skelp ye." The minister was thunderstruck, for as he told afterwards, she looked quite as if she could have carried out her threat. It was, however, a vigorous way of reminding the clergyman of his neglect.

The question is often discussed, was it luck or guid guiding? which enabled the Newton delegates to select such a succession of eminent ministers to the Newton pulpit. The parish itself was not specially attractive, the stipend was by no means such as to attract the highest talent. The best proof of that is shown in the rapidity with which the successive ministers left for "spheres of greater usefulness." These spheres, of course, all accompanied by larger stipends. Withal, however, as each minister left there was no lack of candidates for each vacancy. I have known, too, of many rejected candidates to Newton receiving an appointment to a much better congregation and higher stipend within a few weeks after being so rejected. After all it is not difficult to settle the question. The Newton delegates was favoured with good luck from the first. After the Disruptionthey were fortunate in electing the Rev. Andrew Brown. He actually built up a congregation rapidly, adding to the remnant left by those who formed the Free Kirk. I do not suppose the delegates ever claimed any great credit for selecting John Caird as his successor. Any congregation would have jumped at

him. John Stewart, A.K.H.B., and George Stewart Burns were all appointed with the same unanimity. Apart from the appointments altogether it was an honour to have such distinguished predecessors. I remember when John M'Leod stood as a candidate; the anxiety he could not suppress to secure the appointment. No man in the church had greater influence towards obtaining any position, and yet he was more anxious to secure Newton than he was for any appointment he ever afterwards obtained. Thus it was the delegates always had good leets from which to make their selections. There was always an outstanding candidate among them, and they had the good sense to appoint him. If patronage had always been exercised in the church in the same way as it was in Newton, probably it would have been in existence still. At the recent celebration of a Newton semi-jubilee the Rev. Wm. Rainie naturally drew attention to the numerous changes I have referred to. I give an extract from his address, giving from official documents the dates of these changes, which are interesting. I may only explain one little difference arising from Dr Pebbles' connection with Newton which I always understood had been for over half-a-century. He was the first minister of Newton Church, built in 1776, but it was not converted into a parish till 1779. He was thus only a parish minister for 48 years; in all fairness, however, he might well be allowed his full 50 years as minister of Newton. Mr Rainie's remarks, as the successor of Newton ministers, are as follows: "Newton Church had been a church of remarkably short ministries. Only one of his illustrious predecessors, the first of them, Dr William Peebles, ever attained a semi-jubilee. Dr Peebles had been forty-eight years minister of the parish. He (Mr Rainie) had been unable to find out that the congregation took any notice of his semi-jubilee. Newton Church was built in 1776 and made a parish in 1779. The first minister was Dr William Peebles, "Poet Willie," who remained minister till 1826. He was succeeded in 1827 by Julius Wood, who went to Dumfries and joined the Free Church. He was succeeded by James Stevenson in 1837, who in 1843, the year of the Disruption, seceded from the Church of Scotland and was the first minister of Newton-on-Ayr Free Church. He took with him the greater part of the congregation; he took with him all the elders but one, and he took with him the church library which he had to return. (Laughter.) He was succeeded in August, 1843, by Andrew Brown, who became minister of Beith. He was succeeded in 1845 by John Caird, who ultimately became Principal of Glas-

gow University. He was succeeded by John Stewart, who became one of Her Majesty's Chaplains and eventually minister of St Andrew's Church, Edinburgh. He was succeeded in 1850 by Robert Henderson who went to India. He was succeeded by perhaps the most widely known of all Newton ministers, Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd, who became minister of St Andrews, and was known over the English-speaking world as A.K.H.B. He was succeeded in 1854 by George Stewart Burns, who became minister of Glasgow Cathedral. He was succeeded in 1857 by Robert Wallace, who left Newton for Trinity College Church, Edinburgh, and became minister of Greyfriars and Professor of Church History in the University of Edinburgh, and then threw up both church and professorship to become editor of the "Scotsman," and after about two years in that work he gave it up and studied for the English Bar, became member for East Edinburgh, and died suddenly some years ago. He was succeeded in 1861 by John M'Leod, the eloquent minister of Govan. He was succeeded by Thos. J. Jamieson, Dr Jamieson, now minister of Portobello. He was succeeded in 1867 by W. E. B. Gunn who eventually went to England and joined the Church of England. He (Mr Rainie) was not aware whether Mr Gunn was still living or not. Mr Gunn was succeeded in 1869 by Edward Lytton Thompson, Dr Thompson, who was minister now of the First Charge of Hamilton. He was succeeded in 1875 by the Rev. David S. Peters who is minister of the Middle Church, Greenock, and was dragged through the House of Lords by the Town Council of Greenock. He was succeeded in 1877 by the Rev. Robert Macpherson, now minister of the First Charge of Elgin, and who in 1881 was succeeded by the present incumbent. (Applause.) On 20th July, 1881, there were alive fourteen men who had been ministers of the parish of Newton-on-Ayr; there were now five, and at the most six (he did not know about Mr Gunn). It was a most remarkable series of eminent men that occupied the pulpit of Newton. No other parish in Scotland that he knew of could boast of anything like it. Well might one of these ministers say, "Wonderful people these Newton people—to have been fed so long on veal." He would not say that now. (Laughter.)

CHAPTER V.

The Rev. John Robertson.

My gossip concerning the clergy of Ayr of half a century ago would be far from complete if a reference was not made to the Rev. John Robertson, of the Original Secession Church, Ayr. In one way he was quite as outstanding a figure as any of the Newton ministers of whom we have heard so much. He was ordained minister in Ayr in 1843, the year of the disruption. He came at a time when there was considerable commotion in the other churches. Mr Grant had only occupied the pulpit of Wallacetown Chapel of Ease (as it was then called) for a few months, and having taken the vows of adherence to the Established Church in the full knowledge of all that these vows meant, had seen fit in such a short time to leave it, joining with the noble band which went to form the Free Church, and took with him a large portion of his congregation to form the nucleus of the Sandgate Street Free Church. As already noticed, Mr Stevenson also, after a much longer connection, had left Newton Parish Church, the Ayr ministers, however, remaining loyal to the Auld Kirk. No congregation ever had a more devoted minister than the Original Secession Church in Ayr, and he had a congregation which could compare favourably in influence, numbers, and devoutness with many of the churches in the parish. He was a splendid specimen of the genuine Covenanter. He was of the strictest sect, yet withal, with as broad a mind as the most liberal of his contemporaries. While devoted to his own congregation, his attention was by no means confined to it. His services were freely rendered to every case of distress with which he came into contact among the members of every other denomination. I have often wondered if ever Mr Robertson had even an idle hour except for necessary rest and sleep. It may well be said of him that from early morn till dewy eve he was daily doing as much visiting and ministerial work as is often done by many of his brethren in a week. In the fifty-one years of his ministry in Ayr I never heard an unkind word of him, and yet he adhered to his principles, never budging an inch to humour any one. He was from the first a staunch teetotaler, rare though it was then even in the ministry. Yet his total abstinence took no offensive form. He had no desire to inflict his principles in this respect even on the members of his own congregation. At any public dinner or at any enter-

tainment of a private nature, his glass stood always before him empty; yet he was as jovial and as pleasant as any of those around him whose glasses were frequently replenished. He adhered to his principle. His example was the greatest influence he brought to bear on others, and probably this had more effect than the shrieking which many think more effective in making converts. He was a minister, a missionary, and a hard worker in every good cause in Ayr; and his principles and opinions were well known. I have said the Original Seceders were known as of the strictest sect of Covenanters. A very good story is told of two prominent members of Mr Robertson's congregation. It may be mentioned that attendance at theatres, dances, and many other forms of amusement quite common among the members of other churches were strictly eschewed among the Original Seceders. It was a sort of unwritten law among them, and if ever broken it was done in such a hidden way as is not uncommon elsewhere amongst other lapsers. The two prominent members I have mentioned had occasion to go to Glasgow on business connected with the church. Prominent members though they were, they were only mortal, and in the then uncommon circumstance of a visit to the western metropolis they each thought of taking a night at the theatre. They did not think, however, of indulging in such a so-called act of profanity in company or even letting each other know of their intention. One evening of their visit they had each a touch of headache and required to rest early to get quit of it, and so be fresh for the next day's business, and when all was supposed to be safe they each went to the theatre. Fortunately they had secured seats in different parts of the theatre, but unfortunately each saw the other, although neither was aware of it, and each escaped home to his hotel thinking he had escaped observation. A whisper, however, went the rounds of Ayr after their return that one of them had been seen at the theatre. Of course such a scandal could not be overlooked, and a meeting was called of all the members of the Kirk Session except the ONE who was reported to have been at the theatre. His companion, of course, was asked if he knew anything about it, but not he! He had been unwell on the night in question—ahem!—and for the time being he was not his brother's keeper. He was, however, deputed to investigate the case and report. He called on the delinquent, and after the usual salutation the following dialogue took place—

"I hear it reported that you were at the theatre when we were in Glasgow. Is there any truth in this?"

"If it was reported that you were there too, would there be any truth in that?"

"But were you there?"

"Were you there?"

A twinkle in the eye of the one against whom the fama had gone forth revealed to the other that there was no need of concealment on his part. The twinkle broadened out to a grin, and finally both had a hearty laugh. The deputed elder who had to make the inquiry returned the answer to the minister and his session as the result of his inquiry, that the supposed erring brother had been no more at the theatre than he was, and that people were so fond of talking it was a wonder they had not circulated the report that they had been both so far left to themselves that they had gone to the theatre in company, which of course they had not.

The high estimation in which the Rev. John Robertson has been held in Ayr is best illustrated by the fact that a Robertson Memorial Church has been erected in Ayr—erected by contributions from members of all denominations, so that his name will be kept in remembrance long after all who knew him have joined the majority. At his death many tributes were paid to his memory. From one of these, issued in connection with the Ayr Religious Tract Society, of which he had been a prominent member, I take the following:—

"Mr Robertson threw himself with great energy into his work, and from the first his labours were most abundant, and in these there was no diminution, but the reverse, on to the end. While his own congregation, who were devotedly attached to him, received his first and chief attention, he laid himself out to minister to all as he had opportunity—and especially among the careless and neglected—and soon his hands were full of Home Mission work—work in which he specially delighted. With general philanthropic and religious agencies for the good of the community, both temporal and spiritual, he at once most heartily identified himself; and while adhering steadfastly to his views and principles as a Seceder, he was ready to co-operate in the most catholic spirit, with Christians of all denominations, in promoting the welfare of the people, when this could be done without compromising his ecclesiastical position—a position of which he was never ashamed, but in which he gloried.

"An institution in which Mr Robertson took the deepest interest was the Industrial School, which he helped to found, and of which he was Chairman when he died. The

children, by whom he was looked up to as a father, attended his Church regularly every Sabbath, sitting together in a part of the gallery; and one of the most affecting sights on the day of his funeral was the filing of these boys and girls past the open grave that they might have a farewell look at the coffin enclosing the remains of him who had done so much for their welfare both temporally and spiritually.

"How devotedly and unselfishly Mr Robertson laboured among all classes of the community, and especially among the poor and the outcast, is known to everyone at all acquainted with his manner of life. After the example and in the spirit of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he became 'all things to all men that he might by all means save some,' and full of faith in the power of the Gospel and in the power of the Spirit of all grace, he laboured not in vain. As one has so well put it—'With a singleness of purpose which refused to be diverted to side paths of any kind, he gave himself for more than fifty years to the work of bringing the hopes and consolations of the Gospel to all classes of the people. At no hour of the day or night did he ever refuse a call to the bedside of the sick or dying, and his sympathy for those in trouble and sorrow was always ready and heartfelt. His figure during the furthest memory of most people now living has been a familiar one on our streets; and whenever met, it might safely be predicted that he was in the way of the discharge of some duty or on some errand of consolation. It is sad to think that we shall see our revered friend no more; but his memory will long be cherished and have its influence as that of one who furnished a standard rarely attained of high and blameless Christian character, of unflinching adherence to principle, and of ceaseless and unselfish devotion to the work of the Christian pastorate.'

"The end came somewhat unexpectedly on the 7th of June, after a short but sharp illness of a few weeks' duration, he having reached the ripe age of eighty-one. His remains were laid in their last resting place with kindred dust amid public tokens of respect and mourning such as have seldom been witnessed, the universal feeling being that by Mr Robertson's removal a blank had been made in the community that would not be soon or easily filled up."

In my gossip regarding the clergy of sixty years ago I am naturally drawn, in presenting the picture recalled by my reminiscences, to the pictures of the clergy which were presented by Burns sixty or seventy years previous to that

time. The "Holy Fair" may have been a true picture—for Burns only pictured what he saw. I do not mean by this that all the clergy of his day were the same; it was only those with whom he had come most in contact that he so vigorously lampooned. I do not presume that any one would accept the "Holy Fair" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night" as faithful descriptions of every "Preaching," as they were then called, and of every cottar's home. Doubtless there were ministerial gatherings to which such descriptions as the "Holy Fair" could not be applied, just in the same way as there were many Scottish scenes in humbler ranks very unlike that pictured by "The Cottar's Saturday Night." But whatever may have been the state of affairs in Burns' time no such picture could be drawn as depicting the state of clerical society half a century ago. Possibly that picture contributed largely to the change, but at anyrate the change was most remarkable; I can vouch for the fact that such orgies half a century after Burns' time were unknown. I am sorry to add, or rather express the fear, that such scenes as are set forth in "The Cottar's Saturday Night" are not so common either. But here I am moralising again, and I refrain from further application. Speaking, as a whole, of the clergy of the middle of last century, I do not mean to say they had all become

TOTAL ABSTAINERS,

far from it, a teetotaler was the exception, not the rule. There were Presbytery dinners and frequent festive occasions in manses. I do not remember that at any of them which I attended I ever saw any excess. Everything, even amidst what any one might call frivolity, was done decently and in order. There doubtless was more than one tumbler taken—for toddy was the liquor used, champagne came into vogue much later—but seldom or never to excess. If to drink moderately was to drink WELL, but to abstain altogether was the better course, ministers and elders were content, as a rule, to do WELL and leave it to others to do better. I know of one clergyman who might, by the more strict, be thought of as indulging "not wisely but too well." Still, even in his case he was content with one tumbler. I never knew him take more—only I may explain that ONE tumbler was somewhat prolonged. It certainly started with one fair glass of whisky, about double that quantity of hot water and two lumps of sugar; but no matter how long the sederunt lasted, there were constant

"ekes." First, another lump of sugar would be added, then a wee drop more whisky, and this ekeing continued during the whole sitting; still, it was the first and only tumbler, but at the same time quite as much, if not more probably, than those who had to plead guilty to having taken three or four complete tumblers. I may tell a story here, however, of clerical drinking, which has been laid to the charge of several clergymen. It is worth telling, and, if not true, it ought to be, as an illustration of the question of total abstinence v. moderate drinking. It deserves the heading of

SHAVING WATER.

A bachelor clergyman was approached by a deputation of the ladies of his congregation who had formed themselves as a teetotal society, asking him to become their president. Very reluctantly he agreed, and took the pledge, though he did love his glass of toddy at night. Manfully he gave up the habit, to please his lady members, and became a total abstainer. It did not agree with him, however, and in a few weeks he became really unwell and had to resort to medical advice. The doctor could see nothing organically wrong with him; only, he was out of sorts—run down and requiring a change—something wrong which he could not well make out. On enquiry the doctor found out that his patient had given up his "use and wont" tumbler of toddy, and he at once ordered him to resume it. This the minister would not do; he had taken the pledge and would stick to it.

"Well," replied the Doctor, "stick to it at your peril."

"But I cannot break my pledge. Since I have promised I must perform."

"Very well! Keep your promise and practically commit suicide."

"But, Doctor, how can I do it? Look what a rumpus would be kicked up if, after a few weeks' trial, it was known I had recanted!"

"Well, just resume your old habit. Take your tumbler at night and say nothing about it."

"But, then, my housekeeper would know and tell; so I may as well do it openly."

The Doctor, who knew "Janet's" proclivity for gossip, did not think this unlikely, so the minister and he concocted the plan to keep a bottle of whisky in his wardrobe under lock and key, with a supply of sugar, and commence shaving at night; hot water to be brought up regularly.

This continued for several weeks, and the minister was restored to his usual good health. Probably, for the credit of the minister's moderation, the story should stop here; but with the desire to make these reminiscences as complete as possible, and true to life, I have to complete it. The Doctor met Janet shortly after the minister's recovery, and remarked to her—

"Weel, Janet! ye'll be glad to see the minister's a' richt again!"

"'Deed no, Doctor," replied Janet in mournful tones; "he's far from it!"

The Doctor, astonished, asked why.

"Oh, Doctor, he's worse than ever. It's an awfu' case!"

"But," remonstrated the Doctor, "ye're surely wrong, Janet. I saw him lately, and the man's in perfect health —just as well as ever he was."

"No, no, Doctor! you're wrong, Doctor, far wrong, indeed; but it's his head noo that's wrong, not his body."

"His head!" said the Doctor in astonishment; "what's wrong with his head?"

"Well, Doctor," replied Janet, almost in tears. "Shortly after you prescribed for him when he was ill he took it into his head that he would shave at night. Well, shortly after that he commenced to shave both morning and night, and now he has commenced to shave in the middle of the day, too. Take my word for it, Doctor, the man's clean lost his senses. It's an awful business."

The Doctor diagnosed the case easily, but did not see very well how to explain away the symptoms to Janet. This story appeared as a new story only a few months ago, and was applied to a decent country minister. It is at least fifty years old, though doubtless it has done duty as original once a year since, and possibly may never have happened at all. If not true, however, it deserves to be, and therefore deserves recording.

CHAPTER VI.

CHANGES.

One desirable object I mean to serve by these reminiscences is to afford a comparison between the time I write of and the present day. In many respects we are better; in others I am afraid we are not. I mean, however, to present persons, places, and things as they were in the times I refer to, and leave people to judge for themselves if the improvement is so great as some allege. Perhaps in this will lie any history my gossip may have. It is not ancient history, for three score years does not carry us back to antiquity, but it is history and a description of "Auld Ayr" as it was at the time I speak of, and many are yet living who can verify it. First of all I may devote a few sentences to the changes in the streets and buildings which have taken place since the middle of the last century. These have been at least as great in Ayr as in any other town I know of. A few years ago there appeared in the "Observer" what some were pleased to call a very humorous prospective description of "Ayr thirty years hence." It was a somewhat sanguine forecast of the possible, but rather improbable, picture of a greatly improved Ayr, after thirty years, even of great progress. A similar picture of Ayr, drawn fifty years ago, of what it actually is, with all the changes in it which we see now, would have been pronounced equally improbable. A picture of the suburbs of Ayr, Newton, and Wallacetown, as they exist now, would also have been deemed an almost impossible transformation. At the time of that fanciful forecast the railway goods station at the north end of the New Bridge was then passenger and goods station combined. What is now the railway station was a quarry hole, with mounds and waste ground around it, similar to what is at present to be seen at the Bellrock quarry. All beyond the "Ayrshire and Galloway Inn" was pasture land, with the exception of a few villas and large houses—such as St Leonards, The Knowe, Carrick House, and others. Miller Road was just being opened. Beresford Terrace and the numerous fine houses and terraces now on the Dalmellington, Monument, and Midton Roads were very slowly being very gingerly thought of. "Imrie's Nursery" was in its full glory then, being quite a large horticultural farm. The Cattle Market even was a very small concern behind a dead wall attached to the Old Cattle Market Inn. Dalblair House, enclosed with a high wall, occupied all the space in Alloway Street

down to its junction with High Street; and Kyle Street was a narrow lane with the poorest class of old thatched houses in it, and leading practically to nowhere. There was scarcely a building on either side of the High Street down to the Wallace Tower of any consequence, all being of one or two storeys—the "Tam o' Shanter" Inn, the old "Wheat Sheaf," and the "Whip" being the most prominent buildings in it. One or two good fires even yet are required to have High Street what it should be, for notwithstanding many advantages the progress is still very slow. From the Wallace Tower down to the Winton

THE OLD WALLACE TOWER.

Buildings the street was narrow, the widening not taking place till after the amalgamation of Ayr, Newton, and

Wallacetown in 1873, when the whole of the north side was taken down, the Wallace Tower only being saved by having the footpath run through it in a curved archway. It would have indeed been a pity to have pulled down what is really one of the most elegant street marks we have in Ayr. It was erected in 1824, and took the place of a former tower which was in keeping with its surroundings at the time, of which we give an illustration.

New Bridge Street and Sandgate then were recognised as the principal strets and the centre of the town. The removal of the Railway Station and the increased importance of the Cattle Market, however, has drawn the trade up Townhead-wards. The Fort, now almost entirely built on, was then an open space, with no buildings behind the Academy and the New Church.

In Newton, changes equally great have taken place. The Main Street—always the widest street in the town—is becoming built up as it should be, and a new Newton has sprung up beyond Tam's Brig. Even that bridge was not then in existence, no Falkland railway junction having been formed. From the gushet opposite Newton Manse gate, a clear, straight view could be had out to Prestwick Toll, not half-a-dozen houses being in the whole distance. Now there is a perfect town of villas, cottages, and terraces, containing a population greater than the whole population of Newton as it formerly was. The same can be said of Wallacetown. John Street was only built upon one side, there being no buildings whatever facing the Wallacetown Established Church and the Roman Catholic Chapel. The Craigie feuing ground was not then even thought of; there was no Cage Walk attached to the Railway Bridge, far less the Victoria and Turner's Bridges. Hawkhill was then a small dairy farm occupied by Mary Blane, and all the houses in that direction of any note have been erected within the past thirty years.

The changes which have taken place in Ayr during the years I speak of have, indeed, been marvellous. Its borders, certainly, have been broadened, and if the changes in its inhabitants have been very marked; they are not more so than in the place itself. My gossip, however, is to have more to do with the residents of Auld Ayr than with its structures, and these I only mention in passing. The previous chapters have been taken up very much with churches and ministers. Certainly, the improvements in our churches have been great, and our church services also have been much improved—I won't say anything about an improved clergy now, they can generally speak for them-

selves. Our school buildings also have gone through quite a transformation, but I will come to them by and bye. I have one or two chapters reserved for "My School and Schoolmasters," which will appear in due time. Following the clerical or ecclesiastical chapters, I now reach the political condition of Auld Ayr at the time I am treating. We had just passed from the Whig and Tory time. These appellations had somehow become terms of reproach. Old Tories and old Whigs were giving way to the terms of Liberal and Conservative. These terms were liked, and if you wished to hurt a Liberal's feelings you could call him an old Whig, or what was worse, a Radical, while a Conservative equally disliked the name of Tory being applied to him. It is doubtless a nice name "LIBERAL"; it is only a pity it is not more real. If it is now fairly applied it must be because it consists to a great extent of being liberal with other people's money and property. To be LIBERAL with one's own is not always practised by the most pronounced so-called Liberals. "Conservatives" is also a likeable name. To conserve, to preserve, old and valued institutions and privileges, to conserve even your own rights and your own property is sensible enough, hence politics apart, to be a Liberal or to be a Conservative, or to be called so, was no discredit. "Auld Ayr" was undoubtedly Liberal—its Town Council was Liberal, its M.P. was Liberal, and altogether Liberalism was dominant. At election times, too, there was much liberalism shown in abusing Conservatives, who, being the weakest in number, had their windows broken, and many enthusiasts in Conservatism were liberally treated to abuse and had their hats knocked over their eyes to show the liberal character of their antagonists. Rowdy scenes on election days were common, such not being possible now where the parties are so equally balanced. The minority, as is often the case, might have the best of the argument, but physical force was resorted to, moral suasion being little thought of. Early in the fifties, among the last of these rowdy elections took place when Colonel Blair was returned for the County of Ayr, and Mr Crawford for the Burgh. The Burgh election was very close, Mr Crawford beating Mr Boyle by only nine votes. Lord James Stuart had held the seat for many years, and was followed by Mr Crawford for about as many. Ayr had not then earned the character of "wobbling." The franchise, of course, being limited, tenants under £10 in the Burgh and £50 in the County being all non-electors, they showed their power, if not their intelligence, in the most forcible manner at their disposal. This feeling of the

non-electors was, however, only exhibited at election times. Strange to say, when the heat of the election was over, the so-called Liberals did not retain their popularity, and Conservatives who were badly treated during a contest resumed what might be called their old popularity. Indeed, it became a bye-word that to be a Liberal in politics by no means indicated a liberal person; and a Conservative, while conserving his own, was esteemed by many as the more generous of the two. However, the worst feature in political strife was that imperial politics were mixed up with municipal affairs. Not only did the party wish to monopolise Parliamentary representation, but the control of the Town Council as well. No matter how able or popular a member of the community might be, it was with the greatest difficulty he could find his way into the Council, while very commonplace people, if Liberal, found their way into it easily. After the election of Mr Crawford, however, a change began to creep in, very slowly at the first certainly, but a division arose, brought about, perhaps, by personal bumptiousness. Some of the leaders of the Pairty became overbearing, and to them it was not so much political ascendancy which was aimed at, as a personal monopoly of all municipal power. This evil will be brought out more prominently when I come to deal with our Provosts and Bailies and the municipal wire-pullers of the time. I merely mention this fact now as preparatory to the changes which have since occurred in the management of burgh affairs. I think Mr Crawford, the burgh member, was partly the cause of the breaking up of party municipal rule. He had not the same influence nor the amiable manner of his predecessor, Lord James Stuart. He allied himself with a clique, and he was frequently opposed by candidates even of his own party, and sometimes nearly defeated. The final blow was given him when an out-and-out Conservative in the person of Sir William Cunningham turned him out by an even narrower majority than that by which he was first elected, and it must be admitted that even in that small majority was a large addition of Liberal malcontents, who joined the Conservatives for the time being. This temporary disruption was long in coming to a head, for till then the Conservatives were as far as possible debarred from the enjoyment of municipal loaves and fishes. Whenever there was any symptom of a successful "Tory raid," the party would unite, and for a time any mutiny in the camp would be suppressed. I cannot resist reproducing an amusing squib which appeared as illustrating this. There are a great many still living who will very

well remember the great amusement it afforded. There had been disunion in the camp, and a municipal contest was at hand, and a serious attempt had to be made to close the ranks to keep out the obnoxious opposition. To enjoy "the squib" to the full, one would require to know all the parties mentioned and the circumstances. Those who do remember the time will enjoy its reproduction, and for the better information of many who don't I may explain the situation briefly. Few of the personages who figure in the verses are now to the fore. Those who are will not be much averse to the reproduction of a "squib" of their younger days; they have all increased in years and in honours, and can smile at the reminiscence. Several who figure in it have lately been removed from our midst, and even modern readers will make out the references very well. I have no doubt the effusion was issued from the "Observer" Office, and it is needless to say the allusion to "Grannie" is meant for our contemporary, then the Liberal organ. The old Whig element predominated in what was called the Liberal party and died hard. There was a desire to be Whig and yet Liberal as well. The object now was an amalgamation and to smooth difficulties. The supposed meeting was held in the Ayr Arms, recently erected on the site of the old Wheat Sheaf. Mr Alexander Gemmell (Sawney) was the genial landlord, and, like all landlords, he was very willing to welcome all visitors to his new premises. The references to Ex-Provost Goudie, his father, the Burgh Engineer, Mr M'Derment, Bailie Rae, Henry C. Gray, and others, if not perfectly understood, will be guessed at. It will be remembered also that at that time Forbes Mackenzie's Act was recently passed, and the hour for shutting was 11 o'clock, not 10 o'clock as now. The full humour of the piece will not be appreciated by many who do not know the characters. Mr M'Derment's call for "the Provish, the Provish," and the allusion to Bailie Rae and Mr H. C. Gray would require to be fully understood to give the full humour to the satire. As it is it gives us a fair view of the Municipal politics of the time. The effusion was headed—

AYR MUNICIPAL ELECTION.

GRAND "CONFERENCE" OF INFLUENTIAL LEEBERALS.

Wi' a wee drap o' drink in, I dauner'd last night
To the head of the High Street where Sawney shines bright,
And the ancient Ayr Arms, with a new face, is seen
Sticking fast to the wall where the Wheat Sheaf has been.

As I passed in the light of the wide open door,
I was shocked and half-sobered at once, by a roar
Quite unearthly, but somehow familiar to me,
So I halted, and cried "What the deuce can it be?"
Being rather bamboozled, I tried hard to think,
Is't a madman, or somebody murdered in drink?
Has G——ll? but hark, there again! loud and clear—
Oh, confound his long jaws! it's our ain Engineer!
At this moment the Landlord came (smiling of course)
To see young Pat unstrapping and stabling a horse;
And said he (with a grin) when I asked him to tell
What the row was about, "Gang and see for yoursel'."
Having weathered the stair, for a second or more
I stood breathless and frightened behind the room door;
And thinks I, "They are either prize-fighters or prigs"—
When the door was half-opened, and lo! they were Whigs!
Before e'er I had time to begin with a story,
Said a lang chap tae me, "Sir, my name is Macrorie!"
"Mak—roar—aye!" I hiccuped (and offered him snuff),
"Then I think ye're weel named, for ye mak-roars enough!
If wide throats and strong lungs were the qualifications
Required in the men who give counsel to nations,
Lord John Russell might fill up his cabinet there,
And still leave us of spouters a leeberal share."
"Hold your tongue," cried Macrorie, upraising a fist
Which might flourish a sword, but now flourished a list,
"I will put my pen through the first man who will dare
To insult, in my presence, the Provost of Ayr."
In these words there perhaps was no murd'rous intent,
On reflection, I think what the brave Lawyer meant
Was to put his pen through—not my body and soul—
But only (with ink) through my name on the roll.
At the moment, however, he put me in dread,
And assuming great rev'rence, I showed my bare head,
And begg'd he'd forgive any words I might use,
As I was just—poor soul—coming out from the Blues.
When this statement was made I observed quite a pause.
I was dragged in and greeted with rounds of applause—
"Give him something to drink, May he be a long liver,
Hip, hip, hip, hurrah! and the Yellows for ever."
To me the whole scene was unusual and strange,
But I thought myself happy to witness the change,
And was glad to sit down with a pipe and a pot,
And take notes in a corner, unknown and forgot;
Excepting Sir Robert the younger and lesser,
And his namesake, Round Robin, another transgressor,
Our brilliant Reformers were here in a body,
And twinkling like stars through tobacco and toddy.

In Political studies, abstruse and profound,
They were deeply engaged o'er perhaps the fifth "round";
And whatever their state at the time when they met,
They were now learning fast to forgive and forget.
The Leeb'rals, it seems, although known as the blatest,
Had got demoralised trying who should be greatest;
And here I beheld their union in glory
To save our "auld toun" from the "Backsliding Tory."
A droll Cow-feeding Bodie, shut out from the rest,
Because he showed symptoms of vile Hinder-Pest,
Explained (with a hiccup) for my information,
That what I now saw was called "A-mal-gam-ation."
The first speech I heard was from Bailie Macreadie,
Who, compared with the rest, was uncommonly steady,
And who said, "We should not, having fined ither folk,
Sit here drinking oorsels past eleven o'clock."
This proposal to rise raised up only a ferment,
Which was speedily quelled by the squeals of M'Derment,
Who announced (as if every one else was a novice),
Whilst thump, thumping the table—"The Provish, the Provish."
The Lord Provost rose at the call of his man,
But he stuck in his speech just as soon's he began;
And Grannie relieved him by calling on Gray
To inform them how long they might law-fully stay;
For her own part, she thought, for the good of the town,
Cannie Andrew and she might yet melt a half-crown;
And however illegal their deeds might appear,
They were quite safe, if nobody knew they were here.
The Miller's bald head was here gracefully bent,
As I thought, in approval and cordial assent;
And the Salt-coated Councillor snuffed out the law
Which presumed to say how many corks he should draw.
The Bailie then left for his evening's devotion,
But there was not a soul found to second his motion—
Even Steele, quite well tempered, at one with the rest,
Expressed his belief that old customs were best.
And Bung-hole declared that, so far's he could see
(Which was not very far), all his friends would agree
That whoever this motion might think of sustaining,
He had nothing whatever to lose by remaining.
"Let the Landlord be sent for," Earl Grey cried at length,
And the Landlord appeared like the sun in his strength;
"Whereas," said the Earl, "by an Act which was passed
"For restraining young fools when inclined to be fast,
"It is now thought a crime, I might almost a sin, say,
"To break through the limits of Forbes Mackenzie.

"And whereas we desire not to leave the impression
"That we countenance people in any transgression;
"Be it known we're assembled on business of State—
"So just stop your clock and it cannot get late;
"If the clock does not tell you the time, don't you see
"It is clearly impossible you can tell me?
"And if you do not say—'it is now gone eleven,'
"We can say that the landlord no notice had given.
"Your 'license' and mine will be thus beyond question,
"And my conscience appeased by the simple suggestion.
"But should any one sue you at court for law-breaking,
"Use this plea—yet don't say it was one of my making—
"And be sure our friends here, who Magistrates are,
"Will make all things quite square 'twixt their bench and your bar,
"If you quite understand, sir, you may now retire;
"Meantime tell your Lady to keep a good fire,
"Send in plenty of whisky, keep hot water handy;
"'And for those who abstain, send a few halves of brandy."
"Oh, if them are your views, by the laird Hary! Gray
(Cried the voice of that Stentor, ex-Councillor Rae),
"If my ears don't deceive me, my friend and my brother
"Why should we be longer estranged from each other?"
"There's my hand," was the answer, "I sometimes may shirk
"A true neighbour like you at the council or kirk,
"But to cut you at present I cannot afford,
"You're as sharp as a needle and grace a good board."
There are strange scenes in life—I myself have seen some—
But when these fell to hugging I was overcome;
Consultations, in whispers, soon after waxed deep,
But at the tenth tumbler I fell soun' asleep.
Near the sma' hours four friens o' the "public" and people
Roused me up, and they oxtered me hame by the steeple.
When we pairted, said they, "Noo, gude frien' ye maun really
(Their names were S——, M——, T——G——, and M'N——,)
"Vote the day for the pride and the boast o' our toun—
"F——. Tommy St——, Bauldy R——, and M. B——;
"The lads o' the richt sort, sae wise and unerring,
("Min' we arena dictating but only 'conferring');
"And whan ye get hame, if your wife rates you sairly,
"For drink and late hours, say it maun be quite early,
"For the clock the twal hours ye were sure hadna chappit,
"And there wasna sae meikle as sma beer a-tappit,

" And that is quite true, for the clock wasna slewing,
" And t'was toddy and grog they were leeberally brewing!"
The langer we leeve—we're aye getting mair licht;
And nae doubt we a', saw the double that nicht.
I gaed to my bed and got up rather reesy,
To vote for the chiels a' sae " Free " and sae easy;
I gaed to the Poll, and my suffrage put down
For F——, Tommy, and Bauldie, and B——
The Provost was there as sober's a judge,
To keep the lads richt whom he feared might budge.
My story here ends; and its moral is canny;
When trouble breaks oot 'mang the bairns o' auld Grannie,
The best way to settle the brawls o' the quorum,
Is jist to " confer, and to pass roun' the jorum."

Then, as now, there were numerous attempts at metrical composition. It is dangerous to call it poetry, for there are many standards set up as to what poetry is. It is safe to say there was much good, bad, and indifferent, and then, as now, there was a predominance of the indifferent. I would not call the foregoing indifferent—far from it—but to many it may seem so, who do not know the character and the humour of the piece is thereby somewhat lost. The following effusion will perhaps be more easily understood and readers of my reminiscences will follow it, I daresay, and enjoy the humour of it. It cannot be put down as indifferent. I confess I think it much above the average, and it is not so long since the Cadgers' annual meeting was a thing to look forward to, and the following is an able squib which was much relished at the time. It was entitled:—

A SANG IN SEASON,

Being the Mille-Centennial Ode ÆVI. of the Northern Whipmen Composed on their Derby Day.

Tune—" The Lass o' Gowrie."

I.—Eulogistic.

If e'er ye're in the toun o' Ayr,
Gang tae the Newton when ye're there,
An' see a sicht ayont compare,
The Getherin' o' the Cadgers!
'Mid trump an' drum an' banners beirin',
Each trooper's for his Captain's steerin',
An' wives an' weans wi' joy are cheerin'
Our braw, big gaucie Cadgers.

II.—Geographical and Political.

If ance the icy Polè is got,
It's said ye'll fin' a brawny Scot;
That DAIL was gi'en tae him by lot
At the North Pole o' the Cadgers!
Like Medes o' auld as aft's they sit,
They twice consider what is fit;
At first a' SQUARE, then, tae gie't wit,
They COMPASS it as Cadgers!

III.—Classical and Original.

The Greeks their names in games hae writ,
An' ither names the Romans hit,
E'en gods themsel's maun bend a bit—
"We a' dae't," sing the Cadgers!
Yet dinna in the classics seek
For Derby or Cock-a-leek,
Tho' tellin' Kipper's name in Greek
Is the test o' 'prentice Cadgers!

IV.—Ancestral and Heraldic.

Their birth dates back, L——d kens hoo lang,
Afore the days o' Charleymagne!
Afore the days o' dance an' sang,
There leeved auld men ca'ed Cadgers!
In days when sales were made by barter,
Afore the days o' priest an' martyr,
Afore the Knichts o' Bath or Garter
The Thistle deck'd the Cadgers!

V.—Social and Archæological.

When Noah swam out frae his ark,
Wha pu'd him oot an' dried his sark,
An' toasted him in Newton Park?
A forbear o' the Cadgers.
Hence ilka August, on the Friday
That's next the twalt, they haud their hey-day;
They busk their nags, an' then get TIDEY
For the big SPATE o' the Cadgers.

VI.—Cynical.

"Diogenes gaed oot ae nicht,
An' ran aboot wi' lantern licht,
He thocht tae fin' an honest wicht"—
He fan' him 'mangst the Cadgers!
Quo' he, "I like yer braid bu' caps,
Yer horse an' graith, yer drams an' snaps;
Sae cauk me doun amang the chaps
That form the core o' Cadgers!

VII.—Diabolical.

Auld Clootie ance frae 'yont the mune
Amang douce folk cam' hirplin' roun',
Stowlins he thocht, puir menseless loun,
Tae settle wi' the Cadgers!
But couldna thole sic couthie chaps,
Their kintra's wines an' mashlum baps;
Gowled he "Od! rot, yer 'nae heel-taps,'
Pray let me oot the Cadgers!"

VIII.—Patriotic.

When Bruce did back the Southron turn,
Wi' Freemen brave at Bannockburn,
The steeds that chairg'd as they'd been sworn
Were lent by Newton Cadgers!
When storms hae raired and lives were risk'd,
Wha oot tae sea the lifeboat whisk'd
An' sune ashore wi' joy a' frisk'd?
'Twas kinsmen o' the Cadgers!

IX.—Real and Personal.

Unlike the Shanter o' the tale,
King Henry brocht his horse aff hale
On oor New Brig, and did prevail
Tae the honour o' the Cadgers!
An' sa sin oor Toon Ha' is built,
Tent me, Provose an' Dean o' Guilt,
The "first fit" that sud enter till't
Maun be a host o' Cadgers!

X.—Prophetic.

Gin ony unco fae sud lan'
Upon our bonnie Newton stran',
Fear nocht gin sodgers can't be fan,
But trust our loyal Cadgers!
Jist draw them up alang the shore,
Weel wet wi' dew, an' let them splore,
Ise wad my heid that never more
That fae will face the Cadgers!

XI.—Sentimental and Valedictory.

Then drink tae the Newton Forty-eight,
"The Guardians o' oor Kirk an' State,"
An' drink tae Newtonians sma' an' great,
An' join wi' that the Cadgers!
Lang may they ride oor streets an' pree!
Lang may the yill an' kipper gree!
Lang may the sword-dance en' the spree!
Here's tae the Newton Cadgers!!

CHAPTER VII.

Mr James Baird of Cambusdoon.

Notices of the more prominent members of the community of Ayr of fifty years ago would be very incomplete without a reference being made to the late Mr James Baird of Cambusdoon, the great ironmaster; a millionaire when millionaires were not so common as they are now, and the great benefactor of the Church of Scotland. Mr Baird was a man in a thousand—aye, one in tens of thousands. Some men are born to greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. James Baird was great in himself; he made himself great. There was nothing small about him, mentally, morally, or physically. His was a great mind—a powerful will; and if he did not always command success, he at least deserved it, and in his case he had not much reason to complain. He was generous; not with that lavish, ostentatious generosity which we often meet, and which sometimes does more harm than good. He was a willing giver; only he liked to be sure that he was giving where it was deserved, and where it would be beneficial and draw forth other efforts; if possible to double the benefit arising from his gifts. His greatest donation was that to the Church of Scotland, amounting to half a million. The amount, the mode of giving and the nature of the gift, were just like himself; it was a princely gift, and he was a prince among men. The amount was greater than had ever previously been given for any religious or charitable purpose, and the manner in which he gave it was not as others did generally. He did not keep it hoarded up till after his death, when he could not take it with him. He dictated the form of the trust which was to administer it; he saw it in full operation before his death, and was even able at first to assist in its administration. The gift in its beneficial nature was the grandest of which a good man could conceive. James Baird was a religious man, consistently religious—if he did not cast off the old woman, he at least cast off the old woman; he wished others to be religious as well, and he was very willing to asist in making them so. His religion was not of the namby-pamby sort, but practical, muscular, and, if I may use the word, patriotic. Mr Baird was a Scotsman, and even in his speech stuck well to the Doric. He sometimes even used strong language which, strictly speaking, was not parliamentary, and smacked more of the golf course than the

drawing-room. He must, however, be judged by the times, and by those with whom he came in contact. He called a spade a spade, and occasionally came out with a good strong "damn." I by no means attempt to justify swearing; it is a useless, silly custom which should be put down, and can in no way raise any man who is guilty of it in any one's estimation. Mr Baird's expletives, however, meant no more when he used the offensive word than others mean when they use such exclamations as "Oh! dear me!" "Bless my heart!" or some such mild expression. This, however, reminds me of a story which I must give as an illustration, and I cannot resist telling an anecdote if it at all brings more clearly home my meaning. Two clerical dignitaries met once on a coaching tour. One was a distinguished Scotch Presbyterian, the other an equally distinguished English Episcopalian. They got on the most friendly terms, and actually got the length of agreeing as to the similarity of their respective forms of worship. The Englishman even admitted that in doctrine and sentiment they were identical, the only difference was the "form of ritual." This certainly narrowed down their differences to the vanishing point. There was a mixed company on the top of the coach in which they were travelling, and as they turned round a bend of the road they suddenly came upon a magnificent view of one of the finest pieces of scenery on the road. All were charmed with the scene. One, more sanctimonious than the rest, exclaimed, in his rapture of admiration, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" A jolly old sailor sitting behind, also lost in admiration, exclaimed, "Well, I'm damned!" The two clerical dignatories looked at each other, struck with the difference of the expressions which had been called forth in admiration of the view, when the Scotsman said, "Ah, yes, the sentiment is exactly the same; there is only a difference of ritual." Moral: Be careful in your exclamations; even ritualism can be carried too far.

To return to Mr Baird, however. He came to reside in Ayr about sixty years ago, purchasing the small estate of Craigwell, on the banks of the Doon, from Lord Nigel Kennedy. The mansion house was comparatively small, but instead of making additions to it, he, with his characteristic thoroughness, pulled it down, and erected a mansion three times the size in its place. Even the name he changed from Craigwell to Cambusdoon. The site is particularly well chosen, being at a bend of the Doon; hence the name chosen—Cambusdoon, "cambus" signifying "bend." The whole farm of Greenfield, then occupied by

Mr White and let at a rental of upwards of £5 per acre, was added to the policies. The farm house was pulled down and re-erected near Burns Cottage. Mr White removed to Galloway along with a number of Ayrshire farmers then taking farms in Wigtownshire, and it is worthy of note that he got there a farm, at the same rent and with as much good land as he had at Greenfield and two hundred acres over, which still remains in his family. On taking up his residence at Cambusdoon, Mr Baird became at once a most important member of the community, and a large contributor to all schemes calculated to promote the welfare of all connected with the district. He gave liberally—not ostentatiously; he was a warm politician, and it is no secret that he gave handsomely in support of the Conservative cause in the burghs and counties connected with his extensive works. He was always a warm supporter of all churches, giving, however, only to those which were willing to do something for themselves as well. A remarkably good story is told of his liberality to churches, or rather as to where he drew the line at giving. While always willing and ready to help those who had done their best to deserve it, he hated all cant and hypocrisy and could not endure the snivelling beggars who came with servile flattery to crave his generosity. A manly statement of the need for help, and what had been done to deserve it, always commanded from him ready sympathy and assistance; fawning hypocrisy got from him scant courtesy. The following story is told, giving a fair illustration of this. A minister from North Ayrshire had heard of Mr Baird's generosity to needy churches. His church was needy, and had some debt on it; also he was desirous of a manse, and here he thought was a fine easy way of getting all he wanted. He inquired as to the great donor's habits, and learned that he was generally to be found early in the day, after breakfast, enjoying his smoke in the grounds at Cambusdoon, and that he rather favoured early risers, and those who were not above walking some little distance to obtain what they wanted. Driving out in a carriage to beg did not obtain favour in his eyes. So the reverend gentleman only took a cab out to the entrance gate of Cambusdoon and WALKED up the approach, and found, as he anticipated, Mr Baird walking about enjoying his morning smoke. He at once approached him.

"Mr Baird, I presume?"

"Aye! Wha are ye?"

"The Reverend A—— B——, from the Parish of ——, near Kilmarnock, and I'm taking the liberty of calling on you on very special and important business."

Mr Baird indicated his willingness to hear what that business was, and the reverend gentleman, thus encouraged, proceeded.

"While praying this morning for guidance during the day, and seeking help where only it can be found, and much requiring that help for my church and my poor flock, I seemed to be directed from on High to direct my steps towards Cambusdoon where I would find relief from all my anxieties. In fact, Mr Baird, the Lord has sent me to you for the help I need."

"Then the Lord's wrang this time; I'll gie ye nothing," was Mr Baird's reply, and further appeals from the minister were in vain. He left, it is to be hoped, wiser, though not richer, but more sad than he came.

The Ayr Dock.

Ayr has not benefitted much from benefactors. Other towns, such as Paisley, have had favours bestowed on them in profusion, and Ayr, with seemingly better chances and with more reason for favours being bestowed, has had to go without them. Ayr has much in its favour. Nature has been highly favourable in bestowing on it marine and sylvan beauty; but far above even that, its historic renown, ancient and modern, has contributed much to its importance. At all periods in the history of Scotland it has been in evidence. Royalty recognised it in the earliest records; Wallace and Bruce were practically sons of the "auld toun"; Cromwell and Knox had a connection with it; and, last, but not least, in modern times Burns immortalised it. Still though historically so great, it is not all it should be. No town has a record approaching it, yet many have far surpassed it in many ways notwithstanding its natural and other well-known advantages. It is a "guid auld toun," but it might have been much better, and many chances have been lost to make it better. It is much to be regretted that many of these advantages and chances have been thrown away by the stupidity of the so-called "honest men." In other words the honest men of Ayr, in the past, have not done their best to make it all that it should be—and could be—with reasonable care and wisdom. One great chance was missed by the treatment meted out to Mr Baird. The broad-minded laird of Cambusdoon, a thorough Scotsman, an admirer of Burns, able and willing to add to the attractiveness of the Burns country, unfortunately came into conflict with the dignatories of the day. The facts of

the case are these. Ayr had an imperfect water supply. The water company of the day proposed to increase that supply by acquiring what is known as the "Milton Springs." It is only fair to state that these made a fair auxiliary to the supply already possessed by the water company, but they were limited, and the minds of the shareholders of the company were also limited. Perhaps their capital also was limited; in any case they resolved to acquire these springs. To obtain them the consent of Mr Baird and other proprietors was necessary, and the chairman and engineer were deputed to interview Mr Baird and obtain his consent. This was just about as unfortunate an occurrence as could be conceived. Mr Hugh Cowan, a most respectable and highly respected member of the community, was chairman of the company, and Mr J. I. MacDerment, an able engineer, and as adroit a man of business as need be, was secretary and engineer to the company. The estimation in which these gentlemen were held in public was great, but was even surpassed by the opinion which they held of themselves. They met Mr Baird, who was only an ironmaster and a millionaire, a man of ability and broad views, no doubt. Still he was only—ahem!—only Mr Baird, while there were Hugh Cowan, Esq., banker, and J. I. MacDerment, Esq., C.E., whom everybody in Ayr held in all reverence, and Mr Baird then was not so well known. The interview resulted in a sad loss to Ayr. They told Mr Baird they wanted the Milton Springs to add to the water supply of Ayr.

Mr Baird told them such would be a mere temporary addition and not worth having.

They knew better! and it was all that was required.

Mr Baird knew better still, and told them so, and that they should go to Loch Doon and get a decent supply.

Lords Cowan and MacDerment thought is preposterous for such a person as Mr Baird to thwart them and the public in getting what they wanted, and told the obstinate man they would take what they wanted in spite of him.

Mr Baird was not so humble as they thought, and did not cower as they thought he should have done; he preferred to face annihilation rather than submit tamely to their demands.

The result was not difficult to foresee. It was a fight between a broad-minded, able man and a parcel of weaklings, with the public purse behind them to pay for their folly. They got by Act of Parliament the Milton Springs at a cost of £5000, and to get that Act cost them other £4000, and to utilise the Springs cost them upwards of

£20,000—in all £30,000 virtually thrown away; for in a very few years afterwards the town had to go beyond Loch Doon for a full supply, and Mr Baird's suggestion was found only too late to be absolutely necessary; had it been adopted at the time it would have saved all the outlay so uselessly incurred. A much greater loss was indirectly sustained by the town on account of this water dispute. A Parliamentary Election ensued after Mr Baird's refusal to give up the Milton Springs. On the nomination of the candidates, which was then done in public, Mr Baird was refused a hearing. Whenever he attempted to speak his voice was drowned with shouts of "Dam the waater," "Dam the waater," amidst great laughter. The joke was good enough, and it pleased the crowd to be able to use the word "dam," not as a curse, but to serve a party purpose. Probably at the time he had no kindly feeling in his heart for those who were thus damning his speech, and could have applied the word "damn" to them; but I am afraid this display of public feeling did more, for it did dam an intention Mr Baird then had of making Ayr the gift of an Educational Institute similar to that at Dollar. There was a suggestion of giving a building costing £50,000, and an endowment of a similar amount, and certainly a broad-minded gift like that to Ayr would have been a boon, the value of which could scarcely be over-estimated. Other places seem to use possible benefactors better than Ayr used one who had the heart, the will, and the head to do great things for it, but "luck and good guidance" have not always been very prominent in the place which no other town surpasses for something else. It may redeem to some extent the folly of Messrs Hugh Cowan and J. I. MacDerment and the populace at the parliamentary election to know that some years afterwards Provost Steele, one of Ayr's best Provosts, was more successful in his approach to Mr Baird. The harbour of Ayr at that time was in a very dilapidated condition and in want of all modern requirements. A dock was suggested, engineered by Mr MacDerment. It was another £30,000 job; but Provost Steele fortunately was selected to approach Mr Baird for assistance. He evidently did so in a SENSIBLE way. He pointed out the importance of the work, the advantage it would be to Ayr, and, I have no doubt he added, the advantage it would be for the export of the minerals from Mr Baird's own fields. It was at all events successful. But Mr Baird's mark was to be on the dock. It was to be no "hole," like that at the Milton Springs; no £30,000 job, but a decent dock, costing a quarter of a

million: and "he would advance the whole outlay." Provost Steele was equal to the occasion; if Mr Baird would advance the money, the Provost, on behalf of the Trustees, would RISK its acceptance. It is thus entirely due to Mr Baird that Ayr has such an excellent harbour. At the same time credit is also due to Provost Steele and Mr John Pollock, then Town Clerk, who carried out all details in such a satisfactory manner that there was no chance of the matter turning out a fiasco like the water scheme.

If Mr Baird was thwarted in his desire to see Ayr going in for a scheme which would have given at an earlier date a complete water supply such as it now has, and if his educational aims were not carried out as they might have been, fortunately the harbour improvement was by his means effected and many other minor schemes were successfully launched and carried through mainly by his assistance. Among others, the new church at Alloway and the erection of Alloway into a parish was mainly due to him. Even here, however, he was met with ill-considered opposition, and public feeling was stirred up against him very undeservedly. Objection was taken to the site of the new church after the walls was partially built. It was contended that the church would obstruct the view of Burns' Monument from the Cottage, and that it would be an eyesore to the neighbourhood. Possibly there was a little sectarian and political feeling imparted to the fault-finding, so a demand was made to have the building stopped and the church erected somewhere else. The site had been chosen by residents in the neighbourhood, and Mr Baird had granted the site free, and something might have been allowed for local knowledge and liberality, but those who pride themselves in getting up public demonstrations care for none of these things, and never did; and Ayr demonstrated! "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" was at one time a "cry," and, as the worshippers of Diana were roused, so were the admirers of Burns, as his Monument was in danger—or at least the view of it, and that was sufficient. One can look back with feelings of humiliation at popular delusions and feel small over the stir made over nothing. The general feeling was against Mr Baird. Ayr was invaded by representatives from every Burns Club, and men of mark, prominent in art and literature, came down and tried to excel each other in denouncing the ironmaster. They did not know the laird of Cambusdoon; in fact, they did not know what they were demonstrating about. The fiat went forth, "The kirk's needit and it will be biggit" —and it was biggit. However, to give the demonstrators

due justice they regretted their opposition afterwards. These popular demonstrations are frequently raised for very undeserving objects. In Ephusus the coppersmith got up a considerable row over the danger to Diana and her Temple so in Ayr Robert Howie Smith of the "Express" (of whom more anon), set the heather on fire over the danger to Burns and his Temple. There was a brief furore, and the tumult was quelled. The credit awarded to the Town Clerk of Ephusus in quieting the ancient uproar may be awarded to Mr Buchanan of the "Ayr Observer" (of whom also more anon), for quieting the row in Ayr. He it was who took up the cudgels for Mr Baird. It was not the first time, nor the last time, that the "Observer" took up the unpopular side, and finally came off all right. To court popularity and follow every popular cry only brings a very temporary success. A good cause, though unpopular for a time, need never despair, the whirlygig of time brings round its revenges, and popularity hunters have generally to look back with regret as following the wrong cause instead of trying to lead to a better. This "Obstruction to the Monument" died a very natural death, accelerated by the hammering Mr Buchanan gave it in the "Observer." In the press he stood as one combating all the arguments brought against Mr Baird's action, and he poured ridicule on the efforts made to compel him to change the site. I need not enlarge on the topic. The furore lasted for about a month. Mr Baird pursued the even tenor of his way, the building was proceeded with—indeed, it was never stopped. Denunciations from the press from all quarters of the world came in, caused by the false alarm at the proposed desecration of the shrine of Burns. Mr Buchanan battered them all into a cocked hat. The church was completed, while the fickle public mind was changed, and when now looking at both monument and church the wonder is how such a fuss could have arisen.

Mr James Baird was an elder in the church, and one year he attended the General Assembly as a representative elder, after the intimation of his half million endowment to the church. Even about this there were some to find fault. One of the features of the Baird Trust is payment by results, and this did not please many who would have preferred the payment for nothing. The popular ovation Mr Baird received, however, on entering the General Assembly, silenced for ever these fault-finders. It was a fitting acknowledgment of a handsome gift, sensibly given, in a true Christian spirit. Even into his eldership Mr Baird carried his good sense, and discharged the duty in

his usual shrewd manner. He did not think it necessary that because he was an elder he should be glum, austere, always turning up the white of his eyes, and eternally clothed in sackcloth and ashes. He had a strong idea that man could make the best of both worlds, and that he could confer happiness on himself, even by enforcing happiness on others, and he exercised the gifts he had—not attempting to use those he had not. It was told of him that he was asked to visit some sick person, and as an elder put up a prayer. "Na, na!" said he, "I'm the paying elder, no' the praying ane; here's five shillings tae ye!" Prayer is a good thing on all occasions, but five shillings in charity often suits quite as well. It is unfortunate that paying is not more frequently substituted for prayer. Many would be far more thought of if they did what they could and did not attempt to do what they cannot.

A newly appointed elder was once asked to open a meeting with prayer. The giving of five shillings would for him have been much easier. Of the two qualifications I have mentioned, this elder was not willing to do the one which he could, and he was unable to do the other. However, he was pressed to open the meeting with prayer all the same. "A short prayer would do" he was told in an encouraging tone, and finally he had to do it In the difficulty he was in, the prayer of his youth had not been forgotten, and he rather startled the meeting by closing his eyes and in all solemnity repeating—

This night when I lie down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

We can only imagine the peril of many of his audience dying of suppressed laughter before this short prayer was finished for the keeping or the taking of such an innocent soul. Another of the same "anecdotes" is told of one who overcame the difficulty somewhat differently. On being pressed he at once consented and closed his eyes, devoutly opened with the usual beginning of a prayer, mumbled a sentence or two which no one could make out, and closed with the usual ending. One who was sitting next to him remarked—

"I did not hear a word you said."

"I was not speaking to you," was the reply.

In every church there are elders—and among elders we are safe to say there are good, bad, and indifferent everywhere, probably the indifferent predominating; but Mr Baird was by no means an indifferent one. The length of

this chapter, however, compels me to close my notice of Mr James Baird. Millionaires are more common now; I may almost say they are becoming numerous, and it may be matter of regret that among all the millionaires in these latter days there are few to equal James Baird of Cambusdoon. His strong, sound common sense, his generosity, not indiscriminate, liberally yet carefully administered, were admitted by all with whom he came in contact. He was a shrewd old Scotsman of whom any country might well be proud.

CHAPTER VIII.

Schools and Schoolmasters.

Any one giving reminiscences of former times will naturally linger with more or less affection on schools days. Their schools and schoolmasters will command from them a respectful, vivid remembrance, and, with all their faults and failings, tales of these days of old will be recounted with pleasure; and though at the time the restriction—the long, weary lessons that had to be learned, and the severity (very much over-estimated) and the work thought to be irksome, it is looked back upon now with pleasure. There are few but will admit that while at school they longed for the time when they would be able to leave, to enter upon "life in earnest," yet now, when they have discovered how earnest life is, they look back on their school days as amongst the happiest of their pilgrimage here. It would be a worthy ambition to give to the world another "Tom Brown's Schooldays." It is a classic, and now-a-days classics don't teem in either press of pulpit. The hurry of life, especially newspaper life, tends to slip-shod work; and even leisurely productions—reminiscences and such like—are apt, from habit, to generate into garrulity. At the same time, these few, out of the hundreds of thousands, who have read the charming narration of "Tom Brown's" school life would fain draw some comparisons by which their experiences would be shown to be something approaching it. "Tom Brown's Schooldays," though a work of fiction, is, I am informed, a pretty true picture after all, and a veritable history, slightly coloured, with the further great charm about it that it is delightfully written by a master hand, who, although narrating sometimes, very little of importance, makes that little of greatly increased interest. These reminiscences of school days, however, are not to enter into competition with such a masterpiece as Tom Brown's. There is no use of assuming what it is generally well known is not possessed. Possibly credit is not given for this humility. Our task—and it is a pleasant one—is an everyday narrative of an everyday life, written for comparison with that of the present day. It is of the schools and schoolmasters of not so long ago, with some of the more distinguished scholars who attended them previous to 1850, and who afterwards became distinguished, some of them in after life doing credit to their *alma maters* as did Tom Brown's chums.

In these days of School Boards and School Rates it will readily be understood that fifty or sixty years ago things were very different. There were the old Parochial Schools, managed by heritors and parish ministers, and in some places Free Church Schools were putting in an appearance, and here and there an Adventure School. There were some endowed schools, both secondary and elementary, all, however, very different from the rate-supported schools we have nowadays. The Ayr Academy was then in existence, one of the best secondary schools in the land, and recognised as such. I do not say it has fallen off since, but it has not advanced with the times. There are many teachers in the Board Schools now quite equal to the teachers in the secondary schools, in fact, it is not an unknown circumstance that an advertisement has appeared for a master in a Board School, and that, out of a large number of applicants, one has been selected for an elementary school, and on a similar vacancy occurring in the higher class school the second on the leet has been appointed to it. The secondary school in this case possibly received as good a master as the other, yet the chances were otherwise, and the selection indicated that elementary schools were entitled to the best, if any better was going. Possibly it is this apparent equality of higher class and elementary schools which leads to the comparison that sometime arises as to the exact meaning of the word "Secondary," as applied to schools. As I mentioned in my last Chapter, Ayr missed a great chance of obtaining a high-class school through the pigheadedness of two of its citizens, who thought fit to flout Mr Baird, of Cambusdoon. Ayr ratepayers may well look back with regret on what they have lost, from the want of which it was Mr Baird's intention to give. Let me draw a picture here. Fancy a school building costing £50,000—a free gift—for Ayr. An endowment of £50,000, an institution not only giving the best education to the children of the best families in Ayr, but drawing others from all parts of the kingdom, saving our rates and increasing the rateable area, adding many thousands a year to the valuation roll, and thereby lightening all our other local taxes. What a boon that would have been to Ayr. Will no one think of conferring such a boon yet? At the time Mr Baird thought of the scheme there was a better choice of sites available for such an institute. Still, with an extended Ayr, numerous sites remain; for instance, a handsome building for such a school could be well placed on the north end of Seafield. The Racecourse, which will ever be an open space, would be a fine playground for the

scholars, while the sea beach is also at hand, so that as a healthy, open, suitable site nothing could be fore desirable. Ayr has many natural advantages which Dollar has not, and with such an institution added to it no town in Scotland would be more favoured. No attraction could be greater, indeed, added to any place; it would have an influence which the Town Council and School Board might heartily aid in extending, and any outlay incurred would be amply returned to them. The Ayr Academy was got up by

THE OLD AYR ACADEMY.

subscriptions and donations, and was of incalculable value to the community, but something much greater is wanted now, and if supplied would at least equal the benefits received from the present Academy at its formation. About 30 years ago the old building was replaced by a new one, about £9000 having been expended on it. There is no use fighting that battle over again, but I think that the late Professor Blackie's maxim that minorities were always right, will be now generally considered in this case to be correct. The old buiding, of which we give a woodcut above, was pulled down, by a bare majority of the Board, to make way for the present edifice. There was nothing dilapidated about the old one. The masonry and the whole building generally was much more substantial than the present building, and it occupied, also, a better position on the ground, while its architectural appearance could have been aided by two wings at half the cost of the new building, and would have made it more commodious, convenient, and in every way better than the present building, which is already in a greater state of decay than the old building was. Added to this

of course there is a matter of sentiment. It is NOT the old building of a hundred years ago. It is not the old Academy which hundreds in all parts of the world look back upon. It is something new with no past attached to it, and no improvement upon it. A new building such as Mr Baird intended, even a different site, could have had transferred to it quite as much of the old associations of the Ayr Academy of the eighteenth century as could be transferred to a twentieth century building, which would be a modernised and improved institute having attached to it all that would make the old worthy of being remembered, and in a new abode worthy of the times in which we live, which the present one in no respect is. Elementary schools even in Ayr are already throwing the Academy buildings into the shade, so that as a higher class school it might well give way to what would be in every respect much better, the Higher-class Educational Institute I am now advocating.

With the present Academy, however, I have nothing to do here. The Academy of 50 or 60 years ago was then in its prime. Dr Hunter was closing his conection with it, as one of the most successful of Rectors, and was succeeded by Dr MacDonald, who in turn was transferred to a higher sphere of usefulness in Glasgow, and greater emoluments of course, making room for the present Rector. Why should there be a higher sphere of usefulness than Ayr? and, why should we not have Ayr as a higher sphere, such as Mr Baird's gift would have made it, and not be only a competitor with rate-aided elementary schools? Mr Taylor was then also drawing to a close his long connection with the Academy of 65 years as writing master, one of the best writing masters any Academy could desire. He was succeeded by Mr Anderson, a master equally excellent, and one whose qualifications were not confined to giving him a high standing in the Art Department, but were of such a nature that when Dr MacDonald was transferred to Glasgow he was seriously considered as eligible for the Rectorship. It is not the writer's fault that this was not so, for in this case the art master was a classical scholar as well, and an arrangement could have been made in such a way as to be a benefit also to the other departments.

The English master in my time was Mr Arthur Lang. He was appointed in 1832, and his memory is still green in our midst, as he only died at a ripe old age in 1890. He, however, retired about a quarter of a century before that time into semi-private life, as far as teaching was concerned, but not from public activity. It is a mistake to imagine that clergymen and schoolmasters are necessarily

not business men. If they are, certainly Mr Lang was an exception. When well up in years he retired from teaching, but not to enjoy a life of idleness. He has amassed a competence, but he had no desire to be shelved. He purchased Bellevue at an enormous price—£6000 I think it was. Many people in Ayr thought he was very foolish. He had, it was said, paid about a thousand pounds too much for it, and that he would regret it. He didn't. Many people know many things. Mr Lang knew better. I think the value of the land of Bellevue, which Mr Lang purchased, would now reach about £30,000. He also purchased the old Union Bank, with the large garden attached to his residence in Carrick Place. The site of this old bank was purchased from an old Academy master many years previous, possibly at a very small price. Mr Lang, another Academy master, purchased the old building at what building experts said was a very large price. He remodelled the premises, obtained a very good return for his investment, turned the bank garden to a good account, and again sold the old building to another bank at more than double the price he paid for it. When I say that Mr Lang was as successful as an English master as he afterwards became an investor in property, I pay a deserved compliment to my old master, and one he would not have expected from me when instilling into me rudimentary English, which is no fault of his if in my mature years it remains faulty. Mr Yackabousky was French master for many years in the Academy previous to Mr Cree being appointed. He was a Russian Pole, and was reported to be a refugee. He was an excellent teacher, and, for a foreigner, his English was fairly good. Though small in stature, he kept up wonderful discipline, and was much liked by his pupils. Rectors and headmasters in the old Academy amply fulfilled the expectations of the gentlemen, under the presidency of John Fergusson of Doonholm, who transformed the old Burgh School into the Ayr Academy. Many students of the Academy have distinguished themselves in after life. To give a list of them would be somewhat lengthy. That list is yet being added to, and credit may be given for many distinguished medallists who have added renown to the institution. As a matter of fairness, it has to be added that a great number of these later distinguished pupils have only been finished at the Academy. They have been brought forward in the town and country elementary schools, and have in many instances outdistanced the pupils who were reared from the commencement in the Academy. The Academy of fifty years ago was all that could be desired as

a high-class seminary. It has served its day as such, just as the old Burgh School at the head of the School Vennal had served its day when the Academy took its place. What is now required is a High School to supercede it, as it superceded its predecessor, and give Ayr a position in the educational world which all its well-wishers would like to see it occupy again. There is little wonder we regret so much the loss of Mr Baird's magnificent gift; still we won't cry too long over spilt milk. Will no one come forward, either single-handed or one of a few willing spirits, and provide what is wanted!

Wallacetown Academy.

Leaving the Ayr Academy of half-a-century ago we come to another which is now defunct, the building turned into dwelling houses, and the old school almost forgotten, yet in its day it ranked next to the Academy as a first-rate school. Upwards of fifty years ago it was in its prime. It was a private or secondary school, at the head of John Street, built by the headmaster, Mr Wm. Watson, about the year 1833 or 1834. On several occasions there were meetings held in it in connection with the building of the quoad sacra Church in Wallacetown, and in connection with the St. Quivox Parish. It was also used several years after in an emergency when the Disruption took place in 1843. Mr Watson himself, along with Mr John Kay and Alex. Wise, being leading elders in Wallacetown Church both before and afterwards, in connection with the Disenters, who left the Sandgate Street Free Church. Mr Watson's father was a master currier. His son, who carried on the school and lived in the building with his father, was a scholar of no mean ability, but whether a trained University teacher like some of his contemporaries in the Parish Schools, the writer has no means of knowing. At anyrate he taught the classics and some of the modern languages, bringing forward some of his scholars to a high degree of perfection. He took a great interest in Natural Science and Physical Geography, and sought to interest the scholars by illustrations, such as making miniature balloons, showing the effect that might be produced by chemical and mechanical processes in their ascent into the air. Also he would illustrate a volcano in his own room by gathering white sand and building a miniature mountain, having placed powder or saltpetre inside, which showed, when lighted, the appearance of a volcano or crater. One of his earliest scholars called Bennie ultimately had something to do with the ex-

tension of the steam engine, which was then in its earliest stages. Mr Watson took a great interest in all his scholars, and was a strict disciplinarian shrewd, sharp and clever, but withal of a kindly nature. It seemed to him pleasing to return to his scholars a few coppers when they paid their fees (which were not very expensive) at the end of the quarter, and it need not be said the pupils were equally pleased. He had some very able assistants; one of his best was Mr Arthur, afterwards master and proprietor of the Dunoon Academy. Great was his intellectual power, and of a splendid physique and appearance. Mr Cree was younger, a safe scholar and faithful follower of his master, and Mr M'Derment, who was an old man, had usually charge of the younger portion of the pupils. He was of a gentle, simple nature, and was well liked by all, having sobriquets for every one. Strange that the scholars in Watsons' did not think of having sobriquets for their teachers, as they then and since have had for the teachers of the Ayr Academy and elsewhere, such as "Cork" Taylor for the celebrated writing master, and others I need not mention. In mentioning Mr Arthur, this fine old specimen of a master lived to a good old age, having passed away only two years ago. Just a year before that he had a very happy but unexpected meeting with at least half-a-dozen of his older pupils of the Wallacetown Academy, which took place on board the steamer "Juno" on a sail up the Firth, and you may be sure they gathered round the old man, who was proud to meet with them, and spend more than a pleasant hour with him sailing up the Clyde, fighting the old battles of the school over again. Of these half-a-dozen pupils, who unexpectedly met that day, there were Messrs Alex. Loudon, James Alexander, James Dobbie, and the writer. Mr Arthur, it may be noted, had a College education. This noted school could not claim the age of the other two schools existent then in Ayr, such as the Ayr Academy and the Newton Academy. At the same time Mr Watson's pupils, many of them, bore the fruits of their earlier training in the Wallacetown Academy and succeeded in the battle of life, taking their share in the world's work at home and abroad, and many of them attaining to important spheres of usefulness. We need only refer to the M'Ilwraiths—John, the elder son of Bailie M'Ilwraith, only lately gone from among us, who was Mayor of Melbourne, and Sir Thomas, his younger brother, who, after leaving Watsons' obtained a University education in Glasgow, which fitted him for the high position he obtained as Premier, twice elected, of Queensland in the Antipodes. Dr Dudgeon, also recently

dead, after having passed through the ordeal of the Pekin blockade and massacre a few years ago, was also brought up in Wallacetown Academy, and had attained an enviable position as a missionary and medical authority in China. For some years he resided in Prestwick with his family. Then there was the Rev John Muir, whose father was a shoemaker in Wallacetown. He was a minister of a U.P. Church in Hawick. His son is now the eminent Professor of Pathology in Glasgow University. There was also Mr R. Howie Smith, proprietor and editor of "The Ayrshire Express," and Mr Ebenezer Smith, these last both gifted with a degree and showing no mean literary talent from their earliest years. The former, we remember, entertained his chums to many a treat in the matter of "shows" and games, having a very loving disposition. One of his short extempore rhymes, which was caught up by his willing followers when leading them to the fray (they formed in the Fort to meet the foes of the Ayr Academy) finished up thus:—

"The Academicans are not the stuff,
Watsons' are the boys,
Who catch them by the jacket cuff
And turn them into toys."

Happily, we don't remember any serious results of these battles. We youngsters were allowed to write in our school books, like true patriots, our names with this additional rhyme:—

"So-and-so is my name,
Scotland is my nation,
Ayr is my dwelling place,
A pleasant habitation."

I question very much if the Ayr Academy of that time turned out better known citizens than did Watsons'. In close intimacy with the M'Ilwraiths were the Alexanders, both families living near to the school, Bailie M'Ilwraith and Convener Alexander, their parents, holding a high position in Ayr, members of Town Council, and both highly respected. At the same time that the future Mayor of Melbourne and the Premier of Queensland attended Wallacetown Academy, Ivie, James, and William Alexander were also prominent pupils. Then there were the Maxwells, and the Watsons—sons of Watson the quarryman, one of whom now occupies a prominent position in a wholesale warehouse in Glasgow, and whose son was medical officer for the Hospital. Also the Wilsons (three

families), one of the sons of the latter being the respected general manager of Clydesdale Bank of Scotland, and another of them becoming a member of the Queensland Government. There was a Peter M'Nider and a William M'Gill—a successful squatter in Australia—not forgetting, among other ex-Provosts, ex-Provost M'Creath of Girvan, who was not the least apt scholar who finished his education at Wallacetown Academy. It is needless to say that in these days the boys from Wallacetown made raids on the harbour, as in the present time, when the large wooden ships from New Brunswick and Novia Scotia (owned by the Patons), such as the "Abbey Craig," "Minerva," "Ailsa," "Princess Victoria," the "Magog," and the "Reciprocity," or the "Euphemia Fullarton" (Capt. Heughan) from Archangel, came into the harbour, when they would try to make acquaintance with "Jean" the Frenchman on board the French luggers, which would often, in these days, make their appearance in the harbour. The boys would then take possession of the Fort, which then only contained a few houses, namely, the Brewery and the Tower of St. John, a portion of that building now called Fort Castle; and if it was dusk it tended the more to call forth their superstitious contemplations in venturing to look into the numerous cells and caves that then existed within the Tower repeating the call to "His Majesty" himself, crying:—

> "Hosie, Hosie, peep, peep, peep,
> Whaur's the man wi' the cloven feet?
> Here's his head, but whaur's his feet?
> Hosie, Hosie, peep, peep, peep.

We had no physical drill certainly in the school for the boys, so much required now, and no attempt to teach, at least in this school, sewing for the girls, cooking or music, but the scholars, like Hugh Miller with his first schoolmaster, in serving to discover the art of reading, "attained the art of finding stories in books," could read "sermons in stones, books in running brooks, and good in everything," as Shakespeare has it, had a widening, healthful, self-reliant, and helpful tendency. The books then for reading in general literature would include "The Scottish Chiefs," by Jane Porter; "Blind Harry," "The White Slave," or it might be "Robinson Crusoe." The teachers of the school are all gone now, and their pupils also, many of them. Others are scattered far and near, and for the "Maister" himself, whose latter days were dimmed, there might come at last, as there came for "Maister" Jamie-

son ("Drumtochty's Dominie") light at eventide, and our prayer may have been, as his scholar George's was in his dying hour, for the "Maister":—May the 'Maister' and his scholars meet some morning where the schule never skails in the Better Land."

No place in or around Ayr has shown a greater alteration in its outward appearance than the district round Wallacetown School. In its early days in our recollection there was the quarry adjacent, whose excavations gave interest to many of the boys at the school, and especially the boiler house, where many of them learned first to smoke, getting lessons from the then engineman. The quarry, having been a free coup for a time, became the property of the Messrs Alexander after the railway was made, and was turned into a saw and wood mill, now one of the most extensive in the country. It may be noted in passing that their old yard at the foot of Content Street was the scene of the first "Communion" of the people who formerly worshipped in Wallacetown "Chapel of Ease" and served as a meeting place for Sundays in 1843. There was a large open space at the side of the school which was used as a playground and where the "rounders" was the principal game played. Near at hand, beside the railway, was a farm, occupied by the Milligans and afterwards by William Wilson. Beside the playground there was a small stream running into the river, and at the entrance, the river formed what is known as the Ducat Street. Old Peden, the prophet, prophesied that there would be a bridge built over this part, which has now been accomplished in the form of Turner's Bridge, the pity being that it could not have been made wider for vehicular traffic. All honour, however, belongs to Mr Turner for his splendid completion of the prophecy. Opposite the school there was continued down as far as Chapel Brae a low rough stone wall and a field or two, with a small thatched cottage at one end and another in the centre of John Street. At the foot there was a row of houses, ONE occupied by old Mrs Affleck. An orchard ran the whole way from Affleck's up to near the Quarry Braes and is now occupied almost entirely by the Starch Mills (owned by Messrs Hyland & Co.), now almost at a standstill, on account of the American Tariff, we presume. Then we cannot forget that the boys had two "field days" in the year. "One" was the examination day, which happened in August, and usually the bigger boys were asked to make a walking excursion to Burns' Monument, after putting away their medals or prizes, wearing white trousers; visiting Alloway "Auld Haunted Kirk" or walking by the

riverside from the Bridge of Doon to Doonfoot, a free foot-path then being existent all the way. The other gala day was in July when the "Hielan' knouts" or cattle were gathered half-way up John Street and the younger boys would take their whips and learn herding. Or it might be a launch from the shipyard, which was then a very big occasion. Jamie Rumpie was dressed with helmet and sword and got his first voyage in it at the launch. It was a great day when the "Felix," Sir John Ross's Arctic ship, was launched to go in search of Sir John Franklin. Many a lad from the school has navigated the ocean since then, being attracted to it by these scenes at the harbour, and from the navigation lessons they obtained at the school, so that their life became, the most of their days, "a life on the Ocean Wave" with "A Home on the Rolling Deep." The starting of the Craigie Collieries by the late Mr Robert Brown, and other collieries, half a century ago gave additional impetus to building operations in the neighbourhood. The results are now seen in and around John Street. The additional works, and the opening of the bridges, no doubt, added much thereto. One of the characters that the young people at the school at the head of John Street will never forget was "Wee Woods," the "preserver of the peace" and the "upholder of the law." He was the only policeman for many a day in Wallacetown and was a terror to evil-doers and by no means a-praise by those who did well. Always alert; sharp in eye and small in stature, he was the dread of all the boys in the neighbourhood. Seeing, however, I have Newton Academy and the other Ayr Schools to notice, I must not linger longer in my Wallacetown reminiscences and reserve for another chapter the remainder of my schools and Schoolmasters.

CHAPTER IX.

Newton Academy.

The history of this school is of great interest. The late Mr M'Rae was formally installed as parish schoolmaster in 1845, and occupied that position till the passing of the Education Act in 1872, when the school came under the control of the Ayr School Board. In that year Newton and Wallacetown became amalgamated with Ayr. The school (or academy) was built in 1846, with a dwelling-house attached for the master.

As throwing considerable light on the position of affairs in Newton, a great amount of information has come into our hands, through a threatened action on the part of the Ayr School Board, in 1874, to compel the Newton Freemen to continue payment of schoolmaster's salary, from which they contended they were relieved by the passing of the Education Act. The report submitted to the Freemen, by Mr W. F. M'Cubbin, their Clerk, was a most exhaustive one, and was so conclusive as to compel the School Board to withdraw their action. The facts brought out in the inquiry are so interesting, and in some cases amusing, as to warrant their preservation in a volume bearing on Auld Ayr, of which Newton, from its association, now forms such an important part.

The Ayr School Board had made a claim against the Freemen of Newton for continued payment of the sum of forty-seven pounds sterling yearly, being the amount of salary paid by the Freemen to the schoolmaster of Newton prior to the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872.

It was contended, on the part of the School Board, that the Newton School was a Burgh School falling to be dealt with under Section 46 of the Education Act of 1872, which, inter alia, provides that

> "The Town Council of every burgh shall, at the term of Martinmas yearly, pay to the School Board thereof such sum as it has been the custom of such burgh, prior to the passing of this Act, to contribute to the Burgh School out of the Common Good of the burgh or from other funds under their charge, and the same shall be applied and administered by the said School Board for the purpose of promoting higher instruction."

On the other hand, it was contended on the part of the Freemen of Newton that the school was, in every sense, a

Parish School, and fell to be dealt with, as such, under the 23rd Section of the Education Act, which is in the following terms:—

> "The Parish and other schools which have been established and now exist in any Parish under the recited Acts or any of them, together with teachers' houses and land attached thereto, shall be vested in and be under the management of the School Board of such parish, or if situated in a Burgh, then of the School Board of such Burgh, unless such school is the Parish School of the landward district of a parish, partly landward and partly burghal, in which case it shall be under the management of the School Board, and the said School Board, shall, thereafter, with respect to school management and the election of teachers, and generally with respect to all powers, obligations, and duties, in regard to such schools now vested in or incumbent on the heritors qualified according to the existing law, and the minister of the parish, supersede and come in the place of such heritors, and minister, and all jurisdiction, power, and authority possessed or exercised by presbyteries or other church courts, with respect to any public schools in Scotland, are hereby abolished."

Under the Section it will be seen that the School Board assumed, with respect to Parish Schools, the powers, obligations, and duties vested in or incumbent on the heritors, who were thus relieved from all future payment of schoolmaster's salary.

Mr M'Cubbin's report was most exhaustive and too lengthy to give in these columns. It was in some respects very amusing, and I cannot resist giving an outline of it. Mr M'Rae's predecessor was Mr Gemmell, who was appointed in the year 1802, the school being then held in Newton Council Rooms, where it continued till 1846. The appointment carried with it no great emoluments. He had to discharge the duties of parish schoolmaster and precentor in the parish church—if unfit for the latter position, to provide a substitute—and in return he was entitled to the ordinary school fees, baptismal and proclamation dues pertaining to the offices. There was no allowance in the shape of salary or otherwise from the Freemen till on the passing of the Parochial Schoolmaster's Act in 1803, Mr Gemmell, with the evident intention of bettering himself, made his first application, with a view also of having his position more clearly defined as a parish schoolmaster. The application is worthy of reproduction:—

"Newton, 2nd May, 1804.

Gentlemen,—Under you as constituents, I at present enjoy the Newton School, and I must have a heart destitute of every principle of gratitude, was I not to say, that I have experienced much kindness under the influence of your patronage.

Comparing your school, however, with others of similar establishment or considering it as a parochial, enjoying but little of the benefits, attendant upon such, and now almost universally bettering round the country. I, no doubt entertaining the same desires with others like myself, would like to submit the case to your Honours' consideration. Far from wishing that the town of Newton should come forward, like the most of other parishes, and fix a minimum or maximum similar to that of theirs, or any way equivalent, I would only wish to call up the matter to your minds, that after mature deliberation, you might feel disposed and enabled to better the school of Newton and render the situation of your schoolmaster still more comfortable than what it presently may be. It has often passed through my mind that a dwelling-house free of any rent must be a great comfort and advantage to any teacher, especially to one who has a family, and it is an enjoyment many schoolmasters possess even though they be not parochial. This would be an object of desire to any man who enjoyed the privilege of being your schoolmaster, and such an object to me no less than to any other. This, gentlemen, is the object of the present application to you, which, if it should meet with your Honours' approbation, could not fail of impressing my mind with an high sense of gratitude for such an additional testimony of youd kindness. I have reason already to thank you for your countenance and the kindness you have shown since I had the honour of comin gamongst you, and should you deem me worthy of enjoying a free dwelling-house and at the same time make me provision for obtaining that very important object, I could not but feel still higher obligations to you, from whom I have what I presently enjoy. The communication of your Honours' mind on this subject, whether favaurable or adverse, will very much oblige, Your most obedient and humble servant, JOHN GEMMELL."

This application was laid before a meeting of the community, and the meeting agreed to give Mr Gemmell "four guineas yearly towards the rent of a house during the Town's pleasure after Whitsunday first." On this resolution being communicated to Mr Gemmell, that gentleman gave expression to his feelings in the following facetious terms:—

"Newton-upon-Ayr, 9th May, 1804.

Gentlemen,—Deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude for the very great favour which you have cheerfully conferred upon me, I have no other way of expressing what I feel on the occasion but by returning you my sincerest thanks, at the same time wishing I may be enabled to act a part worthy such great attention and kindness towards me from you my constituents:—

Hail, Newton Freemen, forty-eight,
Guardians of our town and right,
And you honour'd high with rule,
Late benefactors of the school—
'Tis you and Newton I am bound
To thank with gratitude profound
And wish you all prosperity,
For kindness great you've shown to me.
May Newton flourish in her trade,
And all the traders rich be made;
Her coal prove still to be a mine,
Wherever Freemen may incline
To shank the ground or other pits,
And load the town with benefits—
Her fishing be a source of wealth,
To all her nervous sons of health,
Who early with the sun arise,
To take the fishy tribes with guise,
Sweeping the deep with sturdy oar,
Till home they come with loaden'd store,
Of fishes, calour from the flood,
To crown our boards with wholesome food,
Her commerce far abroad be great,
Successful to enrich the State;
Her vessels safely plow the deep,
And every seaman safely keep,
In midst of billows' raging roar,
And oft revisit Newton's shore;
Filling the owners here with joy,
And every sailor with employ—
Her lands too yielding much increase,
Her Freedoms rising still in price,
Rise, by being well improven,
And steadings feu'd with plans approven.
Thus will the Newton ever be
Able to give a dwelling place free;
Not only able, but dispos'd,
As in the favour late propos'd—

And while I live to learn A, B,
Or hold the pen to turn a T,
My text will be the Newton's kind,
And Newton patrons worth to mind.
Yes, while my days on earth do last,
I'll praise you for your kindness past,
For this your goodness, cheerfully
To grant to me a dwelling free,—
A favour bearing every mark
Of kindness flowing from the heart,
And worthy of record above,
Beyond the praises of my love.
My heart feels big to you, my friends,
Unable to make any mends;
I wish you comforts here below,
Till to a better world you go:
Meanwhile great thanks to you are due,
From the Schoolmaster unto you.
With prayer fervent, your humble servant,
JOHN GEMMELL.

These amicable and happy relations, however, between Mr Gemmell and the community did not long continue; for we find that, after watching the contention between the parishes of Newton and Monkton, which, as has been already explained, occurred between the years 1803 and 1809, Mr Gemmell did not fail to discern his position as parish schoolmaster, under the Act of 1803, and the old Act previously in force, relating to parish schoolmasters, entitled "An Act for the settling of Schools." It was in that year (1803) that the heritors of Monkton made a demand upon the Magistrates of Newton to contribute towards the salary of the schoolmaster of Monkton, on the ground that, notwithsanding the Decreet of Disjunction and Erection, they still continued to occupy the position of heritors of the united parishes of Monkton and Prestwick, and as such were liable in schoolmaster's salary to these parishes. This demand was resisted by the Magistrates of Newton, and there followed the procedure, which, as already explained, resulted in the Decree of Declarator in favour of the Magistrates, obtained in 1809, in which it was found and declared, inter alia, that the parish of Newton was a distinct and separate parish, bound only to support its own schoolmaster, but not liable for any proportion whatever of the school salary or assessments exigible by the said Act of Parliament to the schoolmaster of Monkton.

It now occurred to Mr Gemmell that, as the heritors of Newton had been successful in freeing themselves from

payment of school salary to the parish of Monkton, and were declared by the Court to be bound to support their own school and schoolmaster, he, being the only schoolmaster in the parish, or, at least, the schoolmaster appointed by the community who represented the heritors of Newton, was entitled to be recognised as the parish schoolmaster of Newton, and as such to receive the emoluments provided by the Acts of 1696 and 1803. With the view, therefore, of qualifying himself to receive the benefits, and enforce implement of the obligations upon the heritors under these Acts, he presented a petition to the Presbytery of Ayr for the purpose of having himself examined by that body as to his qualifications for the duties of his office as schoolmaster of the parish. Accordingly on 10th August, 1814, the Presbytery proceeded to his examination, and, having found him duly qualified, they granted an extract from the records of the Presbytery, as required by the Act of 1803 (Section 16).

This ended in a long litigation, in which the humble suppliant and poetic schoolmaster, Mr Gemmell, seems to have lost all respect for the Newton heritors. At the same time he continued to exact from them a salary of about £25, the minimum which they had to give, and a very modified house-rent. One thing, however, is clearly proved by this action of Mr Gemmell's as a public official. Human nature at the beginning of last century was very similar to what it is at the beginning of this. Mr Gemmell was very glad to obtain the position of parish schoolmaster of Newton, even without salary, the emoluments consisting only of fees. He was grateful when he was allowed in addition a very small sum for house-rent. Then a very small salary was satisfactory, and at last heavy legal expenses were incurred to have that salary made larger. At the present day the same is the case. A situation is accepted most gratefully, but no sooner is it obtained than increases of salary are looked for, and obtained; and the more easily they are obtained the more increases are looked forward to. The wonderful thing is that while it is a favour and an honour to accept any office at an advertised salary, when that salary is increased, even doubled sometimes, it is accepted with a grudge as quite inadequate. A better feeling prevailed when Mr M'Rae was appointed in 1845, at a salary of £34, with the other emoluments, which salary was increased in 1861, in terms of other Education Acts, to £52 10s, the annual sum which the School Board of Ayr wished the Freemen of Newton to continue to pay into their funds on taking over the school; but, as already

stated, Mr M'Cubbin's report induced the Board to withdraw the claim.

Mr M'Rae was an energetic and successful teacher, and sent out a great many excellent scholars who in after life turned their education to the best advantage, and many even now occupy high and honourable positions in our midst and throughout the world. He had always excellent pupil teachers. No school could have been more fortunate in their pupil teachers or assistants than was Newton Academy under Mr M'Rae. There must have been good guiding as well as luck in this, aided, of course, by ability, or at least a judgment to select this ability. Al the pupil teachers I know of have got on well since leaving the "Newton Green." They were not spared in having plenty of duty to perform, and the old disciplinarian saw that the duty given was performed. He did not spare himself nor did he spare others. Several scholars from Newton finished in Ayr Academy and afterwards took high honours. To give a list of those who have reflected credit on Mr M'Rae's tuition would far exceed the space at my disposal, and even to give those I do know of might leave out many others quite as worthy of notice. There rises to my mind at once as prominent among those who distinguished themselves here, David Hunter and George Smith, two Newton boys, who afterwards, in their University careers, carried off almost every bursary for which they contended, and have now achieved great eminence, quite out-distancing hundreds who had ten times greater advantages than ever they had. Our present Provost and many others, still with many years of activity before them, graduated there, while Mr Hutchison, enjoying the otium cum dignitate of a retired schoolmaster, after a successful and most creditable career, is now in our midst. Mr Walter Beaton also, whose success as a schoolmaster has not prevented him being an enthusiastic golfer, or rather whose success as a golfer has not prevented him being an excellent schoolmaster and a jolly good fellow, is also one of Mr M'Rae's best known pupils. But I am only on the border land of the great list I have promised not to attempt to give. Mr M'Rae has himself passed quietly away, full of years and honour, having led a comparatively quiet life, though possessed of an active mind and body such as would have led many to make a much greater noise in the world. As it is he will be long identified with the scholastic and church life of Newton. I have a few anecdotes I would fain add to my notice of Newton Academy of those who are still in our midst, but I would require authority for their publication. Not that there is

anything discreditable about them, but they might be misunderstood, and they are concerning those who would never —at least, hardly ever—do anything which would make them worthy or unworthy of appearing in public print. I only give one anecdote, without mentioning names, of one of our townsmen at present as an illustration of the weight which may be placed on the general belief that Mr M'Rae was very severe in his castigations. I give the story as I have it from himself. He was in disgrace and, as he admitted himself, he had no doubt he was deserving of punishment, and he got it. The punishment he got left a mark (as he quaintly remarks, the master was in good form) and he bolted from the school for home to show his parents what he had suffered. He was delighted at his reception; his father was engaged at the time, but asked him to wait a little and he "would see about it." When disengaged he and his parent found their way to the Academy, up Newton Terrace, and walked right up to the school. The youth was delighted at the prospect of seeing Mr M'Rae getting a wigging from his irate parent. They reached the school door and the master was asked for, and duly appeared, but alas! for human expectation instead of parental revenge falling on the schoolmaster the juvenile delinquent was kicked back into school again with the parental injunction that he was brought back to get MORE, as he had no doubt he deserved it.

Newton Free Church School.

The Disruption did much more than give us a considerable addition to our churches in Ayr and elsewhere; it also brought about a great increase in the number of schools. The old parish school system was ably augmented by the addition of Free Church Schools under the control of the Free Church minister, just as the parish school was under the control of the parish minister. Thus we had an additional school in Newton upwards of 50 years ago. The new school was erected in Main Street next the church in 1851, and was from the first quite a success. It had, however, more changes in its head mastership in the 20 years which elapsed between its erection and the passing of the Education Act in 1872 than Newton Academy had for upwards of a century. The first headmaster was James M'Cowan, who hailed from Comrie; then, for a short time, Wm. Grimmond, who afterwards went to Glasgow. Mr Adam continued for a longer time till he was called to Glasgow Academy; then came Mr Houston (who succeeded

Mr Adam in 1865), with whose name it is now more closely connected, and he, too, has lately joined the majority, only enjoying a few years of retirement from the drudgery of school life. Prior to the erection of the school in Main Street the Free Church had a school in Weaver Street, a primitive building now used by the Salvation Army. (Since the above was written even this building has been removed and in its place we have now the Newton Gas Works. During the short time it was in existence good sound education was also given in it by good masters. Among others were Messrs Williamson, Tivendale, and M'Call. Among the P.T.'s were Messrs M'Cowan, Adam, and Houston prior to their going to the Normal. The two former, as already mentioned, succeeded each other in the Main Street School, while Mr Houston, after leaving the Normal, was appointed to the F.C. Institution, Madras, India, after which he returned to Newton. He continued headmaster of this school till the passing of the Education Act, when he was appointed successively to the Newtonhead School and Newton Academy till 1902, when he retired on the magnificent retiring allowance now granted to headmasters and accepted by those who have something else to depend on, but which cannot be accepted by those who have to toil on to keep body and soul together. The school is now, with a handsome addition attached to it, the Main Street U.F. Hall, the Free Church authorities being even more fortunate than the Newton Freemen in their arrangements with the School Board. The congregation were not only, like the Freemen, relieved of any support being given to the school, but they were allowed to retain the buildings as being the property of the church, though hitherto they had been entirely devoted to educational purposes. One wonders now at the absurd infatuation of English Nonconformists who will not agree with their brethren of the Establishment in modelling the English Education Act after that of the Scotch Act of 1872. Any hardship arising to English Dissenters is purely imaginary. In Scotland we have none. Dissenters are on the same level as Churchmen, and if anything I think teachers attending Dissenting churches are at least as fortunate in securing good engagements as any others. The religious difficulty is only imaginary. There is no such difficulty in Scotland, and United Presbyterians who always held that the church should have nothing to do with education, and Free Churchmen who adhered as firmly as Established Churchmen to the doctrine of a religious education being absolutely necessary have all, since the passing of the Act, enjoyed religious and secular education, under popular

control so far as the School Board elections go, on the same footing.

A religious examination in some schools is not without its amusing as well as its beneficial side, and proves its necessity. I think it was while Mr Adam was head master in this school that a searching examination was made of the pupils. The question was put, "What was our Saviour doing at the Sea of Galilee?" The examiner was somewhat startled with the reply from a youth with burning zeal to be the first to answer, "Please, sir, gathering whelks." The answer no doubt exhibited to some extent the knowledge of a similar occupation on the Newton Shore, but it showed a lamentable want of religious knowledge as to the difference of the times and the occasion, as well as the want of similarity between the shores of Palestine and the Firth of Clyde. No doubt the requisite knowledge was afterwards given. The story, however, shows the necessity of a right Scriptural and secular knowledge being imparted, and that it should be better utilised than it was in the story told of an American who was visiting Palestine and was anxious to see all the famous spots mentioned in the Gospels. It is told that coming to the lake where Peter had walked on the water, he engaged a boatman to row him out to the "very spot" where Peter had attempted the feat which his want of faith made perilous. When at the place the American asked the boatman if he was really sure that this was the "very spot." He received the ready assurance that it was, along with a hint that payment of the hire of the boat was requisite at this time and place. The American pulled out his purse to make payment, and asked how much it was, and was astounded at the large charge made. In vain he expostulated against the enormity of the charge, but the boatman was immovable, and so was the boat till payment was made. There was nothing for it but to pay, and as he did so, he remarked, "I guess there is little wonder Peter tried to walk if the charges then were at all similar to what they are now."

These two stories are illustrations of two different trains of thought. They are both bordering on being improper. The one is pure Newtonian and the other Yankee, and possibly a chestnut, but whether true or not they ought to be, and they illustrate more fully what I mean than any other way I can adopt.

CHAPTER X.

Other Schools.—Continued.

The Newton "Free Kirk Schule," unlike the School Board buildings of the present day, had a very small playground attached to it. In fact, the vacant space in front would have afforded too little accommodation for the beating of carpets for the ordinary spring cleaning of a decent villa or cottage. There was virtually no playground at all, but then, as an auxiliary, the scholars had the broad Main Street, the finest thoroughfare in Ayr—in Europe I was about to say—and wide enough at this part not only to permit of all the traffic passing to the North of Ayr, but also to leave ample space for a playground for the rising generation. Here there were broad footpaths on each side, and a wide street left; or, rather, there was a wide open space not hampered with Guildry Court fine distinctions—showing gutters, kerbs, roadway, and the usual official details which now must be shown (and paid for), but a fine open space, open to ordinary traffic, but also open to the school children's sports of "Rounders," "Deil and the Burning Mountains," "Killiecrankie," "Hornie, Hornie! Stick a Haggis," and other sports, enjoyed then but now looked down upon as too effeminate and vulgar—not "tony" enough and too Newtonian for the more refined, la-de-da, clean-collared muffs, the nipperty-pipperty scholars of the present day. It was a free country then—one policeman, instead of a dozen, and the one was quite as effective as the larger number we have now. There were no school playground and no Newton Public Park, but there was a public street, broad enough and safe enough for all the traffic and for all our favourite enjoyments—indeed, all that we cared for. The Newton Academy had the Green—the "logs"—an open space reserved as a timber yard for the saw-mills in the neighbourhood, but not so reserved but that M'Rae's children could enjoy themselves. Here we had a public thoroughfare, and it was made public in the broadest sense of the word. Along this road went the golfing traffic (limited then perhaps) to Prestwick, and though we had no tramways then, there were a certain number of conveyances; some of them were aristocratic and some not, but they had their share of the road and no more. Among others who used the highway was Mr John Colquhoun. I do not profess to have any special respect for aristocrats, but I hold they are at least entitled to all

the advantages and privileges due to any other ratepayer. Now, Mr Colquhoun (Kohoon, see "Webster" for pronunciation) may not have been a scion of the house of Colquhoun of Luss, or some of the other big Colquhouns, but John—our Newton Colquhoun—if not an aristocrat had all the appearance of one, barring his habiliments. He had a tall hat and surtout (never mind the age, or time and its ravages). Personally he had a good appearance, and one would have said to a certainty blue blood. He certainly must have had a father, and a grandfather too, and so could talk of ancestors. He was also independent, but had condescended to embark in business (are our modern aristocracy not doing the same thing?), but John's establishment was modest, and he conducted it himself. Colquhoun's mansion, off Prestwick Road, consisted of a single apartment and an outhouse, which gave accommodation to his mule, worth about £100 Scots, and an equipage worth nearly as much, if £1 Scots is equivalent to one penny sterling. The business requiring this equipage was of a multifarious order. In exchange for rags, bones, and old iron, parties inclined to trade would receive banners and windmills, not made in Germany, but of local manufacture, seeing that the factory with all its machinery and plant was on his own premises in Prestwick Road. Candy of the choicest description was the most tempting product, and after that, clay prepared from its artificial bed in the mounds around the Annpit Quarry. The business was conducted clear of all middlemen's profits. Mr Colquhoun was the sole medium between producer and consumer. There were no money transactions; it was a pure case of barter—quite primitive—so that discount on bills, cash credits, over-drafts, and discounts for cash were unknown. I do not think John had ever any cause for anxiety as to his bank account, or that the attention of the Head Office had ever been drawn to it. Old and young had dealings with him, generally satisfactory. The old brought skins, rags, bones, and old iron, and received in exchange clay of the first quality for door steps or kitchen hearths; while youngsters, who invariably contrived to pick some of these articles of commerce, exchanged them for delicious sweets in the shape of candy, sweeter by far than any made now-a-days; or, if their tastes were less sensual and more æsthetic, flags, bannerettes, or windmills were given, composed of the gayest coloured papers stuck on the most primitively prepared sticks. John Colquhoun conducted a great business, subject no doubt to the vicissitudes of fortune to which even greater than he has to submit. Ruin

overtook him frequently to my knowledge, and often it was entirely due to those boys of the Free Kirk school, who were very free in more ways than one. When they did a thing, however, they did it well. The modus operandi was, if trade was slack, and the supply of rags, bones and scrap iron exhausted, one boy would seize a handful of John's flags and bolt, John of course setting off in a hopeless pursuit. The boy would disappear up one close and reappear from another, while John on his return would find ruin staring him in the face, his mule and cart only remaining; the flags all gone, candy of course entirely disappeared, and clay, rags, bones, &c., strewn about in all directions. An appeal to the educational authorities was in vain. Religious instruction was given, but in the public highway precept and example were alike set at defiance. The only consolation left was that while ruin seemed to be complete and irreparable, John Colquhoun would appear next day as bright as ever. His stock quite replenished and the crisis being over, a new era of prosperity seemed to have dawned, which would last—till the next time. John, in his best days, had a watch—not of much use to him, for he did not know the time, but he had great pride in exhibiting his possession. When asked what time it was he would pull it out of his fob and hold it up to the inquirer, and in accents of surprise he would say, "'Would you have thought it was that time o' day?'"

John was a favourite with his fine figure, aristocratic face, tall hat, and frock coat, though shabby, but he had rivals in probable public estimation. Peggy Bothick had an establishment close to the school, and she also was feed for her candy. Her place of business being more prominent than the travelling concern conducted by Colquhoun, it had a higher standing, and business was conducted with the current coin of the realm. She manufactured a superior kind of blackman (I think the secret of that manufacture died with her). Her treacle ale, also, was excellent—why has "Turner, Limited" not secured the recipe for that famed brew? There were also treacle candy, black pudding, and other commodities, which really made life worth living. Despite all the good things known with which she provided the youngsters, they were very trying to her sometimes, and sometimes serenaded her with an original ode, which ran as follows:—

Peggy Bothick had a juck,
Oh! but it was fat, man,
She pu'd the feathers aff its back
And boiled it in the pat, man!

As with other high-class hymns, I forget the other verses; this specimen is only given to prove their quality. She had a wee dog too, as well as a "juck," but it was also fat, too much so to be a protector. Life had its drawbacks, though her profits were at least cent. per cent.; but on the whole there were many led a less happy life than Peggy. I sometimes fancy when we hear of the guid auld times, that it was the provision that John Colquhoun and Peggy Bothick made for our creature comforts which made the times so guid. Another purveyor of one of the pleasures of life about this time also was Grannie Sinclair, whose ready-cooked tripe was a delicacy such as cannot be obtained now, even in the most high-class restaurants. For a penny a supply of tripe could be had, which money cannot purchase now. With all the talk of home and foreign cooking nowadays, the delicacies of half a century ago cannot now be imitated, or it may be tastes have become so vitiated that we cannot appreciate what we get. I must, however, leave the Newton Free School, its masters, and its pupils. I may be blamed for having wandered somewhat from the pabulum, which naturally is attached to schools and school-masters, in attending to the sensual tastes and playful habits of their pupils.

I must not omit to add that holidays then were not so frequent as now. We had only a half-holiday on Saturday, and our vacation seldom exceeded a month. At the two Sacraments in April and October we had, of course, the fast day on Wednesday and a whole holiday on Saturday and Monday. We scarcely knew what to do with these two days, for they were not exactly holidays. The "preachings" were on, and I am not sure but that the school was quite as attractive as the church. Shall I say it was not because we loved religion less but because we loved education more? We knew what to expect at the school, and when it was over it was over. In the church, however, we were never sure what was before us, and it was often dull and long enough, and when it was over the "preachings" still overshadowed us and we dared not even whistle and had to assume a virtue even if we had it not. These week-day religious services, however, had added to them a general snodding up of the externals of both church and school grounds—a sort of half-yearly cleaning. Old John Cassillis, who was self-constituted factotum in the management of church properties, trimmed the shrubbery which stretched from street to church, and raked up the gravel, titivating up the whole, Captain Gray (one of the most decent of Newton worthies) giving his supervision

and lending a sanctity to the scene. Youngsters now-a-days have no idea of what their grandfathers and grandmothers enjoyed!

Smith's Institution.

Any notice of the schools and schoolmasters of Ayr of fifty or sixty years ago would be very incomplete without a notice of Smith's Institution. The school was much needed at the time when a Captain Smith left a large sum for educational purposes and to build and endow a school principally for poor children in Ayr. It supplied a felt want in Ayr at the time, for practically there was no decent school on the South side of the river except the Academy. It, as already seen, had swallowed up the original burgh school, leaving no elementary school in its place, and had become a secondary school. I have nothing worth recording concerning Smith's Institution beyond the fact that during the period embraced in my reminiscences it was better known as Dobbie's School. I understand Mr Dobbie was its first master, and from all I can learn was an excellent teacher; and a certain amount of eclat will now attach to the institution from the fact that his son was the late representative in Parliament for the Ayr Burghs. Mr Dobbie was master of the school for many years, and was succeeded by Mr Doak, now schoolmaster at Neilston, and about forty years ago Mr George Bain succeeded him, bringing up the school to a high state of efficiency. The old school was a one-storied structure, about 60 feet by 30 feet, a long room unbroken by partition of any kind. That the furniture was of a primitive kind goes without saying. Mr Bain's success in the school, however, was such as to require an additional storey to be added to the building, and it became a much more prominent institution than formerly. In 1873, however, it was taken over by the School Board, and an entirely new school was erected in its place on a different site, taking over Mr Bain and continuing the name, so that Smith's Institution continues to be one of the most prominent elementary schools in Ayr. In the olden time it served its day and generation, and no doubt it is to be regretted that my knowledge does not extend to any of its scholars, who have doubtless distinguished themselves since that time without my knowledge, and who may in other lands have increased the fame of the honest men o' Ayr. Many have doubtless made their mark, but who they were and what they were I know not.

The Grammar School.

I need only mention this school as a prominent school in Ayr now, though it was non-existent half-a-century ago. In the fifties and sixties of last century there was a great want of educational institutions in Ayr. There were several petty adventure schools, but of little note, in addition to those I have mentioned. The Grammar School was erected by a number of gentlemen to supply this want, and to a great extent was successful. It will be about forty years since it was erected, and ten years afterwards it was taken over by the School Board. The original building has had additions repeatedly made to it until now it may be considered a conglomerate building just as inconvenient and ugly as a public building could possibly be. The site is a good one for a school, and it is almost worthy of consideration if it would not be prudent to pull down the whole present building and use the old material to erect a completely new school. The headmaster who was longest in charge of the school was Mr Graham, a first-rate scholar and a good teacher. He kept the school always up to a high standard, and has given the Grammar School a reputation which will compare favourably with that of many of our best seminaries. In any case I do not think Ayr has suffered in any way from any shortcomings in the schools and schoolmasters of the first half of last century. Educational facilities were very different then from now. There were many deficiencies in these good old times. No doubt it was the shortcomings—whatever they were—which brought about the revolutionary Education Act of 1872. The question will always remain if a less revolutionary Act could not have done as much, if not more good, and at less expense. Great as the change was, the Act is now receiving a further change, which may have as drastic an effect. It is comforting to know it is in good hands, and that in Scotland we are not so apt to create difficulties as some unreasonable ecclesiastics in England are always doing. If we have great and good educational facilities now we are paying well for them, and admitting all the greatest and best it is evident much more money will yet have to be expended before we can say, "Rest and be thankful." I only hope the historian, whoever he may be, of fifty years hence, in giving his reminiscences of the schools and schoolmasters of the present day, will be able to do so with the same kindly feeling and pleasure as I can do of those I remember in my younger days.

CHAPTER XI.

Bankers, Doctors and Lawyers.

I question if a greater change has taken place in Ayr since the middle of last century than can be observed in our list of bankers, doctors and lawyers. Not one of those existing then now survives, though the memory of many of them still remain green, and, generally, it may be said their memory survives with a warm feeling of respect, which time only increases. Banks as well as bankers have greatly changed, and, with the importance of the town, have increased in number as well as importance. There were only four banks in Ayr then, and strictly speaking, from a commercial point of view, there was practically only one. The Western Bank had not then fallen on its evil days, and under the management of Mr P. W. Kennedy (already mentioned in these reminiscences as a Provost of Ayr), did the greater part of the banking business of the town. The Bank of Scotland, with Mr Charles Campbell as manager, was on the same site as it is at present, but in a dilapidated old building with no pretentions whatever of being at all considered a Bank; and at the same time not doing as much business in a month as is now done in the present building in a day. One or two County accounts were kept in it, but very few connected with the burgh. The Union Bank at that time was in High Street, nearly opposite its present site. The then building, though not quite as dilapidated as the old Bank of Scotland, was yet unworthy of being recognised as suitable banking premises, and the new Bank was built on the opposite side of the street. Mr Arthur Lang purchased the old buildings, as mentioned elsewhere, and transformed them into modern shops and business premises. As is known the property has again been purchased by the British Linen Bank, and a new Bank again been erected on the site. The Union Bank was then known as Hunter & Co.'s, though it was entirely managed by Messrs Hugh Cowan, Cuthbert Cowan, William Cowan, and Gavin Gibb. The business also was limited; little or no attempt was made to transact any town business. Several county families had their accounts in it, and it did some little county business; but bankers knew best themselves whether it was worth the expense of the staff which had to be maintained, and the handsome building which was erected for its business. The Clydesdale Bank was then in Newmarket Street under the management of Mr

Patrick Cowan. There were some attempts made to do some business here, but after all it too was limited, and, as I have already mentioned, the Western Bank was the bank par excellence, and no wonder. The manager, Mr P. W. Kennedy, was much liked by every one who knew him. I don't know if there was a "sweating room" in the Western Bank in those days; if there was it must almost have been a pleasure to undergo that remarkable sweating process, which everyone nowadays seems to know about, but which so few admit having undergone. Mr Hew M'Cowan was teller in the bank, and afterwards succeeded Mr Kennedy as manager, and was the first occupant of the new Royal Bank House. Messrs Kennedy Crawford, William M'Creath, Robert Beveridge, and James Dunlop were accountants in the bank, all men of good position, worthy of the principal bank in the town. Men were men in those days, and though some of them were old wives they were dear delightful creatures, and the old women were not confined to the Western Bank. The other banks had their share of them, and the limited business they did was after all just women's work. A few years prior to the smash of the Western Bank a difference arose between the local bankers in Ayrshire connected with the Western Bank and the directors and general manager. The bank not only had the best of the business in Ayr, but in Maybole, Girvan, Dalry, and several other places it had the strongest hold. I do not know the merits of the quarrel, but in 1855 all the Western Bank agents in Ayrshire cut their connection with it and went over generally to the Royal Bank, which at that time had no branches in Ayrshire, but which gladly took over all the agents with the staffs connected with each branch. Mr P. W. Kennedy was appointed district manager of the Royal for Ayrshire. The Western, however, did not sit down quietly and submit to this wholesale desertion in the county. Substantial agents were secured to represent the bank in all places where the agencies were vacated. In Ayr Mr J. D. Boswell of Garallan was appointed manager, with Mr Gavin Gemmell as joint agent, and a carefully selected staff from the head office was sent to keep hold of as many of the accounts as possible. I rather think, however, that the cream of the business went to the Royal, though the Western retained as much, at least, as left it only second to it, retaining as much of the business as placed it above any of the other banks then existing. Well I remember the feeling which many experienced in transferring their accounts. It was not a case of "between two evils choose the lesser," it was of two

degrees of excellence to choose the better. Possibly, after that, many kept two accounts instead of one, and so divided their favours. It was well for Ayrshire that Mr P. W. Kennedy and his friends left the Western Bank at the time they did (for many at that time sold out their holdings in the Western), and though Ayrshire was heavily hit when the smash came, it would have been much more serious—though it certainly was bad enough—if the Ayrshire shareholders had remained in it. When Mr Kennedy and his friends left it, other banks resolved to have a look in. After the Royal Bank commenced operations in Ayr, a branch of the British Linen was opened, and also of the Commercial. The National Bank took over the business of the Western when it came to grief, and shortly after the City of Glasgow Bank opened a branch and for a time did a large business, the bulk of which was transferred to the Bank of Scotland when the City went to the wall. It is worthy of note that while in after years there was much more competition among the various banks, and the business of the town was more evenly distributed, that competition and desire to do business was in no way accountable for the ruin of the Western and City of Glasgow Banks. In both of these banks the country business was sound, large though it was, and in the case of the City of Glasgow Bank in Ayr, it was a business created in a comparatively short time. There were no bad debts whatever, the whole losses of the concern which brought about its downfall was in connection with the head offices, and with the directors themselves. We hear often now in connection even with very small overdrafts in towns of the "head office," and the directors there who seemingly take note of the smallest transactions, severely restricting all provincial accommodation. I wonder if the head offices and the directors of the Western and City of Glasgow were so very careful of their small customers when they were themselves going wholesale with their own borrowings. It was reversing the old adage of taking care of the pence and the pounds would take care of themselves. They took care of the small sums and the hundreds of overdrafts, but the hundreds of thousands were allowed to take wings to themselves. Even yet towns could be more fairly treated with safety in the way of credit, instead of holding that country branches are principally useful to send in their accumulations to be invested in the city. While in 1850 one Bank did almost the whole banking business in Ayr, it is much more evenly distributed now over the seven existing Banks. New premises, new agents, and altogether a more modern system now exists;

and while some of the existing Banks have the lion's share of the business, I do not suppose that there is any branch in Ayr but what may be considered as paying its way and handing over a fair balance annually to the head office, after paying all expenses. Bank agents are now appointed as being citizens of the highest respectability and influence; and though they do not all rise to the height of Mr P. W. Kennedy, yet from the fact that there are now seven Banks, possibly each one doing as much as two branches did in 1850, and some of them a great deal more even than three of them did, the position of an Ayr banker is pretty well established, though there are degrees of excellence among them.

Doctors.

Medical practitioners were more numerous than bankers in 1850, though not so numerous as they are now. Wealthy though Ayr is, many more practitioners are required to look after our health than to take care of our wealth. There were seven doctors in Ayr fifty years ago, now there are more than double that number. Possibly we are healthier on that account, though some are wicked enough to insinuate that if we are so it is in spite of them. The number of medical practitioners, however, in Ayr do not reach to the number of "the clergymen of all denominations," and I am afraid it cannot be said that on that account our souls are much better attended to than our bodies. We are longer lived now and the doctors may claim some credit for this, but though we have about 50 per cent. more ministers, besides a number of amateurs (male and female), our religion and our morals, I am afraid, have not made progress in the same ratio or as the increased attention we seem now to have should warrant. Out of the seven doctors then in Ayr, four of them could lay claim to have M.D. affixed to their names, a much larger proportion than can now claim the same distinction. These were Drs. Whiteside, Sloan, Montgomerie, and Crawford. The other three were surgeons—viz., Messrs John Ronald, William Craig, and J. C. Haldan. Dr. Whiteside was the grand old man of the profession, having a large county practice as well as being recognised as the G.O.M. of the county town. At the same time there was no questioning the fact that New Bridge Street was the centre of the town. The railway station was at the north end of the New Bridge. The Town Buildings, with the reading room, of which everybody of note was a member, held the central position. High Street brought all the commonality down to it, and

Sandgate Street gave all the local aristocracy access to it. The harbour was in the immediate vicinity, and Newton and Wallacetown also sent their thousands over to this grand centre. The house in New Bridge Street facing up High Street was Dr. Whiteside's It was a landmark better known in Ayr than any other building in it. His father resided there before him, so that the Doctor's habitation had long borne the name of the Doctor's house, even before the Town Buildings were erected. It was not the central position of the house which gave it the importance attached to it. The Doctor was a friend of all, rich and poor alike (as his father was before him), and was held in the highest esteem; he was very hospitable, and to know Ayr was to know Dr. Whiteside. Early in last century when newspapers were not so common and when the electric telegraph and railways were unknown, a London paper would reach Ayr, bringing news from the seat of war several days old, but still new, Dr. Philip Whiteside would read the news to an assembled crowd—the only means by which many would ever know what was going on. No wonder the Doctor's name was held in such esteem. He, and such as he, headed the roll of Auld Ayr's honest men, and in this case it was so well deserved that father and son richly merited the respect of all. Dr. Sloan was held next in public regard. Not content, however, with a good practice, he for many years in partnership with Bailie Gavin Gemmell, were lessees of the Ayr Shipbuilding Yard, a losing concern, which ruined both, and the liabilities for which were a burden on them as long as they lived. Not the first time that estimable men embarked on projects which promised well for all concerned, but resulted in failure to the promoters. Dr. Montgomerie, whose brother was mathematical master in the Academy, had also a good practice, and Dr. Crawford, working his way also into an excellent position, was thrown out of his gig and killed in the neighbourhood of Dalrymple. The surgeons also were held in high respect. Dr. Ronald, then a young man, was rapidly attaining the high position he occupied in after years, and is still well remembered by many. Drs. Craig and Haldan were not so well known, but had good practices all the same. I think Ayr had reason to be proud of their doctors of those days; no community could boast of more worthy citizens occupying such an important position. My mention of these medical practitioners would be incomplete if I did not mention another doctor, but who was scarcely recognised as of the profession. He was the black sheep of the flock, but he was well liked where known. Dr Gibb

resided in Wallacetown, and perhaps had as extensive a practice as any, but it was of the very lowest class. Poor Dr Gibb had no lack of ability, but was his own worst enemy. Many of his professional visits had as their sole recompense a glass of whisky, and many had not even that. He was the black sheep of the flock, though many had reason to like him; and but for his failing in the way of a love for drink, he would have been held in high regard. His ability was undoubted. I never heard that he ever mismanaged a single case.

I find that want of space will prevent me completing this chapter and adding to my reminiscences of the banking and medical practitioners my notes on the legal practitioners of those days. Clergymen and schoolmasters, bankers and lawyers have had fair attention given to them. Another fraternity not less honourable has had to be held over, the last but not least of the professions. I feel they deserve a whole chapter to themselves, and I do not grudge them the honour. I only hope they will accept it as such, and whatever knowledge or experience I may have had in giving my reminiscences of the foregoing, I am even more at home in the profession I have to deal with in another chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

The Lawyers of Fifty Years Ago.

I approach this subject with a fear and trembling, which is more pretended than real. There are some in the community who look upon lawyers with anything but a friendly eye. They even go further, in some cases, and condemn the whole faculty as robbers and everything bad, and they may or may not have reason for this. Many have gone to law (of course of their own free will), and lost their case, which produces everything but a friendly feeling towards your opponent's counsel, and very often that feeling extends to their own counsel as well, and when they come to pay for their whistle they find then the grounds for the charge of robbery. Even when they gain their case, some hard things may be said concerning them by their opponent's counsel, which, of course, is marked down against the fraternity as a body. Lawyer's charges, too, are always put down as extortionate. I am afraid there are more than lawyers whose accounts may be fairly or unfairly challenged. I sometimes hear of a moderately charged account (I mean from tradesmen as well as lawyers). It may be said, however, that this is the exception and not the rule. Doctors' bills have often been thought exorbitant. Butchers and bakers are also blamed for overcharging. Even plumbers and slaters have it insinuated against their accounts that they might be more moderate, but I am inclined to believe that it is a trait in human nature that everyone is inclined to take as much as he can possibly get, and lawyers after all are only human. It may be urged in their favour also that after investing a good round sum on their education and spending half a dozen years of their life in which they have no income coming in, they are as much entitled to make a fair living by their profession, as their neighbours who sell tea and sugar, or silks and cotton, or boots and shoes, and who have served an apprenticeship to their business, during which they had more or less of a salary when the law student was eating his head off. Going to law in many cases is somewhat of a luxury. It often gratifies a petty revenge, and, like all luxuries, it has to be paid for. Possibly if the dread of the law were increased by still heavier charges being made the result would be beneficent. When I am at it, I may as well adduce another extenuating factor regarding lawyers' charges. It is generally supposed that nowadays with popular elections the community have

the making of laws in their own hands. In the matter of conveyancing the lawyer's most pleasant, and at the same time most remunerative department of business, legal formalities have to be gone through, necessitated by these very laws which we ourselves insist on being enforced. Lengthy documents have to be drawn out and heavy stamps have to be exacted, and the lawyer is held responsible for the correctness of these deeds. This swells the lawyer's account, while those who grumble at the charges—as if the lawyer were to blame for the whole of it—would howl over the tax of a half-farthing on their loaf, yet sanction a £5 stamp being imposed on the deed conveying a dwelling-house from one ratepayer to another. In the matter of lawyer's expenses, before blaming the lawyer himself blame the legislation which necessitates the lengthy deeds and the heavy stamp duties imposed before a transference of property can be made.

This introduction to my reminiscences of the legal profession as it existed upwards of fifty years ago seems lengthy, like the deeds, which I think could be well shortened. Still the reminiscences have not to bear the expense of a stamp upon them, except the stamp of fairness which I think is reasonably called for. I claim the right to make these comments, as few have had during the last forty years more occasion to come into contact with the profession. I question if any of my readers have been better customers to those who in many quarters are so maligned than I have been. I therefore have taken the faculty as a body, individually and collectively, as I have found them. I cannot join in the declamation I hear some indulging in. There are one or two black sheep in every flock. Would it be considered fair to blame a whole Synod or Presbytery for the shortcomings of one or two members? And surely to condemn all clergymen as being hypocrites is no more to be justified than the tirade I sometimes hear regarding the faculty of lawyers. I wonder what School Boards would say if any one were to maintain that Squeers —one of Dickens' best creations—was a fair type of all schoolmasters. My experience of the members of the faculty in the latter half of the last century made me to think they were very similar to those of the first half. They were writers then; they are solicitors now; but what is the difference in the smell of a rose call it by what name you like? As a class, perhaps, they have more time at their disposal, and necessarily have to travel more, and so have more variety in their mode of living. They are therefore more inclined to be jolly. My recollections of them 50

years ago leads me to form that opinion, and my later experience has not altered my views.

Now, there you have a free dissertation on the virtues and iniquities of lawyers. I use the name advisedly. All connected with the administration of the law I naturally class as lawyers; writers, solicitors, commission agents, and notary publics, may be applied to them, but their most direct appelation is lawyers, those who deal in law in the same way as we speak of a clothier as one who deals in cloth. My remarks in this chapter have so far nothing to do with my reminiscences of the individuals of the profession of fifty years ago. They are all concerning the profession of the present day more than of that period. Of those who existed and followed the profession then not one now remains. Ayr, as the county town, necessarily has always had more of the professional element than naturally falls to mere commercial towns, so lawyers were quite as numerous in proportion to their fellow townsmen in the middle of last century as they are yet. The grumbling is common that we have too many grocers, too many drapers, too many shoemakers, and certainly too many public-houses. We have even too many newspapers (I think so myself), and why not too many professional gentlemen of all professions? But we must just take things as they are. It may be considered, however, something to wonder at that out of the whole of the faculty of the time mentioned only two names survive, connected with the profession, the lineal descendants and successors of those of 1850. The names I refer to were Mr David Shaw and Mr Wm. Pollock, and these names remain respectively at the head of the profession yet. As if to mark the great changes which can take place in a comparatively short time, I regret to have to note that now these names are continued by the third generation. It is the grandsons of those of fifty years ago who now follow the profession of which they were undoubtedly ornaments, and deserved, in the two generations, to be followed so creditably. Comment is here useless on the high position occupied by Mr Charles G. Shaw and Mr William Pollock, who succeeded their respective fathers and whose decease has been so recent, leaving behind them names which many may envy. As I have mentioned among the doctors that William Whiteside was the Grand Old Man of his profession (as his father was before him), so at the same time David Shaw was the G.O.M. of the faculty, commanding respect both in county and burgh in the same way in 1850. He was highly esteemed, and enjoyed the best business connection in the county. The Mr Pollock

of those days was a much younger man than Mr Shaw, and was more in touch with burgh affairs, though with a good county connection as well. He interested himself in municipal affairs, and no party had ever a more successful political agent. His personal popularity in the burgh was always seen at election time, when he invariably headed the poll. He was at one time Dean of Guild, afterwards a Bailie, and, as was shown so conspicuously at the memorable election I have elsewhere noticed for the Provostship, all his supporters were carried, and though some strong men were standing on the opposite side, with the trend of political feeling in their favour, they were yet ignominiously defeated. As if to extinguish adverse opinions held by some regarding the profession, it must be noticed that old established firms increase in popularity and in the respect in which they are held. Young firms may for a time be looked upon as grasping, but as they become better known, and the business increases so does the respect in which they are held. In other words, the longer they are known the more highly they are held in esteem and their position becomes thoroughly established. (Moral, which I do not insist on: Always go to well established firms.) Nothing can better illustrate this than the case of the two families I have mentioned. The numerous members of the profession who then existed are now to be ranked amongst "those who were." I have already mentioned several in other chapters in these reminiscences. Mr Thomas M'Cosh, Town Clerk of Newton, an office which he dignified, and Mr Hugh Reid, Town Clerk of Ayr, held each a high position in the faculty. Mr John Gray was the Procurator Fiscal, but shortly afterwards succeeded to the Ayr Town Clerkship on Mr Reid's death. Mr George Morton, one of the youngest practitioners at that time, succeeded to the Fiscalship of the Burgh. Mr Stephen Rowan, the father of the late Fiscal, held no special office then except that of Session Clerk of the Old and New Parish Churches. Mr John M'Murtrie held a prominent position, and was best known as the first secretary to the Ayrshire Agricultural Association. He also took much interest in public affairs, and became a Magistrate afterwards, succeeding Mr M'Cosh, the Town Clerk of Newton. During a pretty long career he succeeded in securing many public lucrative offices both in the county and burgh. He had a great capacity for business, and no matter how many offices he was elected to, he was always ready to undertake another to swell that number. Mr John Paul and Mr Joseph Erskine were also well known practitioners, and for a time the former was Dean of Guild in the burgh, and became a considerable shipowner. One of the favourite

vessels frequenting the harbour bore his name, and in Ayr and Troon he was held in good repute. Mr Joseph Erskine was for many years Treasurer of the burgh. In the Sheriff Court, at that time, Sheriff Bell was principal, but was not much known in Ayr. Sheriff-Substitute James Robison was well known and respected. Though of a retiring disposition, he occasionally came to the front at special public meetings, and was one of the most polished speakers any one would desire to listen to. Alexander Hunter was Sheriff-Clerk, and, as a rule, only appeared when the Sheriff Principal was sitting. The Depute-Clerk was Mr H. C. Gray, and the Procurator Fiscal was Mr James F. Murdoch. There have been many changes since that time.

I am afraid, however, I cannot attempt to give a full list of the legal practitioners of those days. If they were not quite as much entitled to the name of "legion" as they are now-a-days, they came perilously near it. Leaving, as a rule, no businesses to be inherited by any of their family, even their names have escaped my memory. Of many also I have only a hazy recollection, and it must have been among those that the feeling I have alluded to against the profession has originated. I remember a Mr Harper, a very stout gentleman. I do not think, however, he had a very large business; still what he had he seems to have made the most of it, as some with a limited number of clients seem to do even in modern days. He attended the Circuit Courts, always putting in an appearance at the levee, which of course secured him the invitation to the Court dinner in the evening with the Burgh Magistrates and others. He also contrived to secure invitations to the mess dinners of the Ayrshire Yeomanry Cavalry when they were up for their week's training. The staid decorum observed at the dinner of the Lords of Justiciary did not extend to the mess dinner of the Yeomanry. On one occasion when their spirits were very high—no doubt occasioned by the quantity of spirits consumed, Mr Harper taking his due share—a row occurred, which ended in the lawyer being suspended from the stair head of the King's Arms. The rope, however, was further down than round his neck, being under his arms, but all the same the officers and many onlookers enjoyed the spectacle of hanging a lawyer—and a big one too —testifying to the strength of the rope and the power of the warriors who could handle a body not much under 20 stones weight. I remember the story of Mr Matthew Highet, a well-known ironmonger at the time. He had an account against Mr Harper for a grate which had stood for a long time. It resulted in a small debt action, when Mr Harper denied ever having received the grate. Proof was led, the

grate was described, but the lawyer denied ever having such a grate in his possession. Matthew saw his case was lost, for he could not trace where the grate had gone to. He took his revenge, however, by an assertion which stuck to his opponent as long as he resided in Ayr by declaring that he thought he could find a grate, but, looking at his portly appearance, it would require a surgical operation to get at it. Mr Harper never got over the ridicule attached to the insinuation that he carried about in his person one of Matthew Highet's grates.

There are other three members of the profession I should have mentioned earlier from the position to which they had attained. Mr Alexander M'Cubbin had a high reputation as an accountant, almost confining himself to that department of his business. I am not aware that he undertook any other legal business, and the faculty seemed to recognise his expertness in putting accounts and everything partaining to book-keeping on a sound basis. This seemed to run in the family, for his cousin, Mr W. F. M'Cubbin, so well known in Ayr for many years afterwards, seemed to have the same gift.

I have also to mention Mr James Morton of Belmont, and Mr Robert Robertson, both residing and having their offices in Wellington Square. The latter took an active part in elections, but otherwise both conducted a respectable business, but I do not recollect if they took a prominent position in public affairs. They were both old men at the time I write of, and were allowing younger men to move upwards to the respectable position they had attained. Probably I should look up the files of the "Observer" in the fifties to be able to record their history, but then that would not be my reminiscences.

It is a good few years now since the last of the bankers, doctors, and lawyers of Ayr of half-a-century ago "crossed the bourne," though there are several of their contemporaries in other walks if life who still survive. There are many known who have reached the three-score-and-ten who will remember all those I have mentioned as the professional gentlemen of Ayr in their youth. Their successors have no reason to be ashamed of them. I fear I have omitted one or two; perhaps this is as much in their favour as against them. The good deeds of many are not so often remembered as glaring misdeeds, and it is gratifying to me that I have been able to remember so many much more on account of their numerous good qualities than for any harm they did. I am glad that only a few have left behind them sons and grandsons who cannot claim to be worthy sons of worthy sires.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Press.

Following the lines generally adopted in preparing the toast list at a public dinner, in arranging these reminiscences I have given due regard to the clergy, then to the educational profession, and now I come to "The Press." Probably the legal profession, the Provost and Magistrates, and other notabilities should have taken precedence of the last-mentioned, as is often the case at these public dinners; but as they will be so much mixed up with others, I may finish off the Press at this stage, and, for reasons that will readily suggest themselves, the reference to the Press will not be too prolonged. In this case also the reason I have heard given, when the toast of the Press was proposed, for placing it so far down in the list is not necessary. It is alleged that the placing of the toast of the Press among the finals and after other toasts of much less importance is that the replies are always sure to be safe. Members of the Press are to be depended on as showing the "survival of the fittest." The representatives of other toasts may not have the powers of endurance required to stand a prolonged sederunt of toast drinking; the weakest go to the wall first, therefore the sooner they are put out of pain the better. Representatives of the Press, however, can stand longer; hence that toast is generally placed immediately before the "Happy to meet, sorry to part," &c., &c. These reasons do not apply here, and so for once the Press obtains a reasonably good position. If editors are placed behind clergymen and schoolmasters, that is fair enough; they can reasonably be placed before others, even though they also should be of considerable importance.

It is not my intention to give here an essay on the importance of the Press or regarding the great progress it has made during the past half-century. It will be sufficient if I give a few of my reminiscences of the Press of half a century ago, especially in Ayr, so as not to delay too long giving attention to the worthies and other bright and shining lights who have yet to be dealt with. A brief summary will suffice. The "Scotsman," then as now, was the great Edinburgh paper and was published three times a week. The "Glasgow Herald," also published tri-weekly, held the same position in Glasgow. The other three days were occupied by the "Glasgow Courier," which, like the great bulk of the papers then issued in

Glasgow, has ceased to exist. The "Daily Mail" was then in existence, struggling for life, and even it has dropped into the arms of the "Record"; and the only other paper then existing was the "Citizen," which, however, after a struggle too, has been crowned with a well-deserved success and is now one of the best and most prosperous evening papers in the kingdom.

In Ayr the changes have not been so numerous. Then, as now, the "Advertiser" and the "Observer" were the two papers, healthy and life-like as they are at the present day. There was also in existence the "Ayrshire Agriculturist," which, as its title implied, was a purely agricultural paper. It only remained a few years in Ayr, however, when it was removed to Edinburgh, where it still also remains as a prosperous going paper. Shortly after the Disruption of 1843 a rival put in its appearance to the two existing papers. They were supposed not to be pronounced enough. Though neither claimed to be purely and simply Established Church organs, yet they were not Free Kirk organs, and Free Churchmen seemingly thought they were entitled to have a paper of their own; and for a time Ayr had its three papers, whether to its advantage or not I need not here enquire. Politics are bad enough, and I presume that as long as people have political leanings, papers will be tainted with the leanings of those who conduct them; but surely we might be spared the infliction of having denominational newspapers. It is well known that many who preach peace on earth and goodwill among men are those who are most ready to stir up strife and create ill-will. This running of a so-called religious paper, as if every paper which differed from it was irreligious, presumed too much. The Free Kirk paper in Ayr did not last long and brought a heavy loss on all connected with it. The "Western Watchman" did not keep a long watch in the West, though it was long enough to show how much money could be lost in a very short time even in a supposed good cause. I regret to add that my old teacher, Mr Watson, was involved, and ultimately the loss he sustained brought to him ruin. It was a terrible uphill fight for existence that this Free Kirk organ had, and it was ultimately done to death by an anti-slavery lecture. The effect that lecture had in Ayr is still fresh in my memory. It made a greater impression here than did "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or "The White Slave"—not so much for the emancipation of the slave, but as, I believe, for a much less noble reason. It seems the Free Church organisation, in raising funds for the building of churches in Scotland, had

sent a large deputation to America with the object of "raising the wind," for which they were hard pressed at home. As is invariably the case, even with the best objects, the aim was to get money—honestly, if they could, but by all means to get it. This all means in America meant accepting money from slave-holders, which no doubt was done, and to the horror of the followers of Wilberforce, to a very large extent money was obtained from those dealers in human goods and chattels. The anti-slavery lecturer I have mentioned, when in Ayr on the evening mentioned, warmly denounced the Free Church for accepting filthy lucre from such a source. The lecturer was eloquent, and in a preoration he rose to a Demosthenes height, and in impassioned tones told them to send back the money—the blood-stained money. The "Observer" and the "Advertiser" both made the most of it also. It was a bonne bouche for them to enjoy, and in the enjoyment they did not spare their Free Church contemporary. "Send back the money, the blood-stained money!" they cried with apparent fury, but no doubt if the truth be confessed with more glee than anger. It can easily be imagined with what relish they could pitch into a rival professing to be FREE, and yet accepting money derived from slavery. The poor "Western Watchman" had a sad time of it. To read its rivals' effusions one would have thought it had shared in the blood-stained coins. Added to this, all the school children got hold of it, and upon the walls in Ayr, Newton, and Wallacetown, and wherever chalk could make any impression, could be seen in every corner, "Send back the money!" "The bloody money" was sometimes added. At that time I believe I joined the cry. It seemed popular, and though I was at a Free Church School that made no difference to me. I did not understand, but what did that matter? I think people are more zealous in any cause when they don't understand what they want. I am sure there are some people just now shouting themselves hoarse on the Education question or on Chinese labour, connecting them somehow with Free Trade or Protection; and give them a candidate for Parliamentary honours, only a hat and coat covering a stick, but labelled in the proper way, and the vote is secured. Ninety-five per cent. of those who hold strong views on eccesiastical matters have as little knowledge of what views they are holding as did those boys who at that time chalked upon the wall, "Send back the money, the blood-stained money!" At all events, the "Western Watchman" ceased to appear; it was killed by ridicule. Freedom and

slavery cannot go together, so possibly in response to the question, Watchman, what of the night? its disappearance would indicate that it had gone to see; no doubt glad to be free from the blood-stained money matter.

At the time I am writing about the "Advertiser" had completed a half-century of its existence; its proprietor and conductor being the grandfather of the present proprietor, in whose family it has remained almost during the whole century. There are few even of the few papers which have celebrated their centenary against whom less evil can be said; and that it is still flourishing is a certificate of good management, and is the highest praise which can be given to any going concern. Mr T. M. Gemmell spent a long lifetime in it, and that it was a long life is also the best proof which can be given that it was pleasant, profitable, beneficial to himself, and beneficial to others. Its contemporary, the "Observer," suffered from a lack of continued individuality. It had a proprietary of shareholders, with a succession of editors (among others the Rev. Mr Cuthill and Mr Paterson, author of the "Historic Families of Ayrshire"), and for the first half-century of its existence had more noticeable ups and downs than the "Advertiser." When I first took an interest in local affairs, Mr Glen was editor—brilliant sometime, but erratic; able, but meddling—and I cannot say the "Observer" flourished in his hands. He resigned, or was requested to do so, and did not improve his position after he left for Glasgow. It will be a kindness to draw a veil over the close of his career. He received much kindness from many in Ayr, and repaid them very poorly for it. He was succeeded by Mr Buchanan, formerly minister of Kilmaurs, a born fighting editor. I am not aware of any controversy into which he entered, or any paper war in which he was ever engaged in which he did not come off first or have the honours easy. In a former chapter I have already mentioned his success in changing popular feeling regarding Alloway Church, in which he did not come off second best. I do not maintain he was ever called on to prove black was white; but certainly if he had been he would have made a good fight for it, for in all his contributions—and it is not given to man to be perfect and always right—he never yet was proved wrong, and generally he proved his case up to the hilt, not matter who his adversary was. The "Ayrshire Express" was not long started then. The "Advertiser" was not Liberal enough in some influential folks' eyes, and an out-and-out Radical paper was wanted; so forthwith a number of the more extreme Liberals floated

the "Express," with Robert Howie Smith as its editor. His appointment justified itself, and for a time the "Ayrshire Express" was a success. If the "Observer" and "Express" could not agree in politics—if like draws to like, dislike sometimes does the same—they could at least agree in one thing, and that was opposition to the "Advertiser." Mr Gemmell had tramped on Mr Buchanan's corns in some reference to his former connection with Kilmaurs, and if the clerical memory failed in anything it was not in regard to any supposed injury. I believe one inducement which helped in prevailing on Mr Buchanan to accept the editorship was that he would have unlimited power in castigating Mr Gemmell in it. From the first appearance of Mr Buchanan's Roman hand in the "Observer," never an issue appeared in which the "Advertiser" did not get a good scourging. In season and out of season he kept pegging away, while readers looked in vain for a reply. This was certainly a new departure, for formerly the "Advertiser" fought well, and seldom failed to retaliate when attacked; but now it seemed to take its thrashing lying down, and the spirit of retaliation had evidently taken its departure. Only on one occasion do I remember a shaft, which evidently had gone home, eliciting a reply, in which it was indicated that it had stood these attacks for too long, but would put up with them no longer. Mr Buchanan gave an exultant war whoop, and literally danced with joy, shouting "Come on, MacDuff!" but MacDuff didn't. It was the first and last reply, and the "Observer" was left to smash away; the provocation not being further taken notice of, only serving to make the attacks all the more bitter. To say the least of it, the local Press was anything but peace-loving in those days. Under the name of "Cruiser," a noted horse-breaker's untamable stallion, Mr Buchanan undertook to tame the fiercest of Ayrshire Liberal leaders, and the picture which he drew and circulated, entitled "A Beauty," was something to be remembered. During the progress of an election on one occasion, a country wife was rating the "Observer" as a "scurrilous paper." "And why do you read it?" asked Mr Buchanan, who was present, but unknown. "Na!" she replied, "that's the worst o't; a buddie canna help it." A reply of which he was very proud.

Mr Buchanan had a great gift of humour, which he did not fail to impart into the attacks, adding much to the amusement of his readers, and certainly not adding to the comfort of those whom he attacked, and certainly these attacks were made right and left. To add to the distinction

of the paper at the time, Mr Buchanan secured the active assistance of the Rev. Robert Wallace, then minister of Newton, afterwards editor of the "Scotsman," and M.P. for one of the divisions of Edinburgh. One can easily imagine what an auxiliary he would make, though with all his now well-known ability I question if Mr Wallace in his editorial capacity was superior to Mr Buchanan himself. Mr Prain, a master in the Academy, was an able contributor, and I am only giving away an open secret when I add the name of Mr Ebenezer Smith, then a young man, but already known as one of the ablest of our "Burns' successors." With such a galaxy of writers the "Observer" was well able to hold up its head, and more than able to hold its own with the "Advertiser" even under the able conduct of Mr Gemmell, with such well-known contributors as the late Rev. Mr Walker of Ochiltree and Mr Drinnan of Auchenlee. The "Ayrshire Express" made a fair show of fight also. Mr R. Howie Smith was also a pugnacious journalist, and he had at his back the young blood of the extreme Liberal party, who were not averse to appear in print, so that for a few years the Ayr papers were lively. It is strange that the papers which were, if anything, at opposite extremes were the most friendly—if any real friendliness ever did exist. A coalition between the Tory "Observer" and the Radical "Express" against a moderate Liberal like the "Advertiser" was a somewhat unholy alliance; yet there was such an alliance, Mr Buchanan and Mr Smith being personally most friendly. They exchanged reports, and hob-nobbed together; they even drank together, and, as often happens in everyday life, that was the rock on which they split, and from warm friends they became still warmer foes.

The "Express" appeared early on Saturday morning, and R. H. Smith had a habit by no means to be commended of leaving anything which had to be done till the last moment. It was Friday, and the two editors had been drinking the whole afternoon—a habit not indulged in by editors now-a-days. Late on Friday night Mr Smith was just sufficiently and consciously drunk to remember that he had still to write his "leader" for the Saturday morning, and consciously sober to know that he was not in a fit state to write it, and he told Mr Buchanan the dilemma he was in. The guileless Radical editor was no match for his more wily Tory confrere, who could carry his liquor better, and who offered to write his leader for him; so the two adjourned in their respective states to the editorial sanctum of the "Express." The result was something

awful. Next morning the "Express" appeared with a right good Conservative leader denouncing the Radical Government, and long before the two editors had slept off their potations the leaders of the Radical party in Ayr (good honest men?) at their breakfast table were bewildered at their organ giving forth sentiments which to them were anathema! "Stop my paper" was the substance of several dozens of notes sent in by subscribers. The editor was sent for, but he found it convenient to be out of the way. Mr Buchanan—innocent man—was going about his usual way, perhaps more of the minister and less of the editor about him than usual, but it is said that he and his friend had a meeting late on which terminated in a bitter quarrel, and after that the "Advertiser" experienced that change which honest men are said to have when certain folks fall out. It was no longer a one-sided fight between the "Observer" and the "Advertiser"; it was thereafter a triangular fight—a warfare waged between the "Observer" and the "Express," and the "Advertiser" as well. Mr Smith had his mishap, or rather his negligence, condoned, on his undertaking to repair the damage done. To give him his due he came out of the scrape well, and it was done very adroitly. No owning of a fault was resorted to, or withdrawing the article right off. Next Saturday morning the "Express" appeared, justifying the Tory leader as it had appeared, but several extenuating circumstances were adduced which to some extent toned down the bitterness of the diatribe of the previous Saturday. The following Saturday it was still further toned down, and the Liberal Government had come MORE IN LINE with the views of the "Express," and in less than a month the "Express" was sailing under the old flag, and readers of the paper—who knew no better—came to the belief that the independence of their organ had wrought a beneficial change in their party, thanks to Mr R. Howie Smith, and they were not a bit sorry to know that Messrs Buchanan and Smith were now at loggerheads and fighting with each other most viciously, as all good politicians holding diametrically opposite opinions should do. The two had had their last drink together, and to all appearance the only liquid now likely to be enjoyed between them was blood. Not long after Mr Smith moved to a more important sphere of usefulness in London, while Mr Buchanan's attainments had so impressed the leaders of his party in Edinburgh that he was transferred to the editorship of the "Edinburgh Courant," the principal organ of the party in Scotland, as being the only man likely to be a match for the "Scots-

man," then the great organ of the Liberal party in Edinburgh. While they remained in Ayr they had kept up a continuous warfare, by no means free from scurrility. Mr Buchanan got restored to the Church—reponed I think is the right word—but that did not moderate his vigour or mode of fighting. One Saturday the "Express" appeared with a very bitter attack on the Rev. William Buchanan, in which he was dubbed the very irreverant, etc. It was a preaching Saturday, and in one of the Ayr churches Mr Buchanan was to officiate. Before the service, however, there was issued from the "Observer" office a poetical biography of Mr Robert Howie Smith, the tenor of which may be judged from the opening lines—

"Born in a pot house, cradled in a bin,
Behold young gutter blood his life begin."

and the venom was not moderated as the biography proceeded. I am not aware that after fifty years' longer practice and experience editorial squibs have surpassed this for dour ill-nature. Our two editors left Ayr each breathing slaughter against the other to the last. This feeling was not modified by the "Observer" proprietors at Mr Buchanan's instigation, starting a Friday evening paper entitled the "Western Argus," a penny paper—not very common then—which soon commanded an extensive circulation in all parts of Ayrshire and Galloway. Some time after that the "Observer" passed into the hands of a single proprietor, and the "Express," after some vicissitudes, came into the market also and was bought up by the "Observer," merged into the "Western Argus," and published for some time as the "Ayrshire Argus and Express." A special edition was issued for Dumfries and Galloway, with offices in Dumfries and Newton-Stewart, under the title of the "Dumfries and Galloway Review." After some years these were all merged into the "Observer," which was then issued as a twice-a-week paper, combining all agencies and correspondents into the service of the one paper. This, however, is mere modern history, and does not form part of the gossip of half-a-century ago.

I cannot resist, however, referring further to William Buchanan, the editor of the "Observer" of former days. I have said he was a poet, but I do not wish him to be remembered only as a rhymer fond of castigating his opponents. He published a volume of poetry about fifty years ago which had a wide circulation. I give from this volume a specimen exhibiting his finer feelings. It is entitled "The Dead Child" (an incident which happened when Mr Buchanan was a student in lodgings)—

I mind it well as yesterday,
Though years have come and gone—a score;
Upon my bed one night I lay,
And, troubled, tossed me o'er and o'er;
No sleep would settle on my eye,
No peace possess my throbbing breast;
It was not sickness made me wake,
Not even sorrow caused unrest.

But, in the next adjoining room,
A tiny corpse lay dressed in white—
An infant corpse—a little clay!
I knew it, yet in reason's spite,
Around that object all my thoughts
And wildering fancies constant clung,
Until I could have cried aloud,
But shame denied me tears or tongue.

The mother, with her watchings worn,
Had long since sobbed herself to sleep;
The father, with his toil o'ercome,
What time had he to wake and weep?
The children scarcely knew their loss,
Or knowing, had forgot it, too;
A stranger underneath that roof,
I only woke that whole night through.

No sound stole through the silent house,
Yet to the inner, active ear
Even silence seemed itself to speak
In deep, suppressed whispers near;
No movement at that midnight hour,
And yet the eye, acutely keen,
Saw shapes and shadows in the dark
And muffled images between.

The sounds no human note conveyed
Of wailing grief, or sigh, or moan;
The shapes were what no limners trace,
No earthly form did they put on;
Nor were they of that mingled brood
Begot, as Sadducees might deem,
In realms they never yet defined,
Of a delirium and a dream.

Yet, whence they came and wherefore snte,
And whither tending well I knew;

And, led by them, at last I rose,
And from the bier the cover drew.
The solemn hour—the solitude—
The corpse—the silence—and the gloom—
I've been at deaths and graves since then;
I never was so near the tomb!

The scanty grey of earliest dawn
Gathered upon the snowy sheet;
The swathings round the little head
A halo formed, faint, but complete;
And oh! what sculptor ever caught
The still, entrancing, matchless grace
Which those young features carried there—
I bent me low—I kissed the face.

With reverent care I then replaced
The cover, but no tear I wept;
Then backward to my room I passed,
And laid me down, and soundly slept
And to this hour, when others speak
Of death with shrinking and dismay,
My memory straightway summons up
That Baby's bier, at break of day.

For obvious reasons I feel debarred from extending these notes on the local Press. My love for anecdotage, however, compels me to give two little stories, which are well known to many but deserve a general circulation, and can do no harm in being recounted. A word of explanation, however, is necessary. For a long time the "Observer"—and the "Argus" as well—was dated for Saturday morning though actually printed and circulated on Friday afternoon. This was necessary for the circulation in Galloway, to reach which on Saturday required a despatch on Friday night. Thus it happened that events occurring on Friday night appeared in the Saturday dated paper as "last night's" news, though reported, as sometimes happened, before they took place. Amusing circumstances sometimes happened. When the street arab would be rushing about with the earliest copies to be had for sale, I have known them being asked, "Is that to-day's paper?" "No," they would reply, "it is to-morrow's." One story I may tell, which referred to the late Provost Paterson of Ayr. He was Bailie at the time, and had been asked to preside at the annual trades' meeting of a social nature of the leather trade, including the Ayr boot and shoemakers. The

meeting was held on Friday, the programme consisting of the Chairman's speech, a concert in which several local and imported singers took part, and the usual votes of thanks; all succeeded by a dance. Now, to report this meeting for a Saturday morning paper was necessary, but, for the paper to be printed before the meeting was a difficulty. This, however, was overcome. The Bailie was approached and his manuscript obtained on condition that he was to receive a print copy of it, which would be more easily read to the meeting from print than from manuscript. A lively imagination did not find it difficult to make up a decent report of the meeting with this "piece de resistence" in hand. Thus the report appeared. The meeting—so ran the report—was an enormous success. "Seldom had a finer assembly filled the hall." The Rev. Mr So-and-So opened the meeting with prayer, and the company joined in singing, "Behold how good a thing it is, and how becoming well." This was all in the programme, so it was no stretch of the imagination to report it as having taken place before it did. The Chairman read his speech, which was interspersed with "cheers," "great applause," etc., he, however, having been previously cautioned to leave these out when he was reading it and to pause instead, to give his audience an opportunity of bringing on the applause, so that the report would be correct. The concert then proceeded, and the report gave the singers all sorts of indiscriminate praise. It was also reported that "the comic singing was particularly well received"—it was safe to say that—and that afterwards a ball took place, which was kept up to the strains of What-you-may-call-him's music till the small hours of the morning. The usual compliments to the purveyor were made; indeed I think it mentioned that he had excelled himself in his purveying, and the music was specially good. The whole made an excellent report, and to readers at a distance reflected credit on the provincial paper which could give such an excellent report of proceedings so early on Saturday morning which had taken place so late on Friday night. The awkward part of the affair, however, occurred before the meeting took place. The newsboys got their dozens of papers, and as the shoemakers and their sweethearts were crowding to the hall the boys were there shouting out, "A full report of TO-NIGHT'S proceedings." The papers, of course, were rapidly bought up, and when Bailie Paterson arose to deliver his address it seemed as every one in the audience had secured a copy, as the area of the hall was at once covered with newspapers; each following the speaker to see

that he read it properly, and of course to give them an idea when it would be finished. The reporter of that meeting did not desire to see Bailie Paterson for many weeks afterwards. The other story is equally amusing. There had been a fine season's frost. Castlehill pond was bearing, and in splendid order. The membership consisted of the "elite" of the town. Mr J. B. Paton was chairman of committee, and Mr W. F. M'Cubbin was secretary and treasurer of the Club. They always did things well, and the Castlehill Club was really a first-class swell affair—quite "tony" indeed. (On reading the proofs of this I found the printer had "Tory" here instead of "tony"; but that does not matter much, it was both). The season had been a really good one for skaters and curlers, and to celebrate such a success it was resolved to have a grand torch light procession with fireworks, and altogether a grand display on the ice, making a red letter evening in the history of the Castlehill Club. The arrangements were all complete, and everything promised well till about Friday at mid-day. There had been the usual morning frost, and it looked a certainty that a complete success was ensured. Unfortunately at mid-day a thaw set in. (A graphic anticipatory report of the whole evening's proceeding was by this time in type). In the afternoon rain came on, and by the evening it was falling in torrents, rendering any display at Castlehill out of the question. But then, "mirabile dictu," the full account of the proceedings already in print was published, and, worse still, the paper had gone to press with it a few hours before the fixture. The idea of a thaw had never crossed the Editor's mind, and the account having been drawn out—regardless of the weather permitting—describing the whole thing as a wonderful hit, and stating that such a successful demonstration had not been held in the County town for years. It was a hit and a laughing stock. The committee were complimented for their excellent management; the maker of the fireworks was duly praised for the excellence of his display, which had passed off to the delight of the great company assembled to enjoy the sight; while, above all, Messrs J. B. Paton and W. F. M'Cubbin were awarded the warmest thanks for their indefatigable exertions, which had contributed so much to the success and enjoyment of all. There had been a desire on a former occasion to escape the wrath of Bailie Paterson at the untimely appearance in print of his Friday evening speech, but it was nothing compared to the fury of Messrs Paton and M'Cubbin, who gave no credit for good intentions, but rather the reverse,

for the premature report which had appeared. The frost had disappeared, and the fireworks were put aside for another occasion, and the summer was well advanced before the Editor of the paper allowed himself to come across Messrs Paton and M'Cubbin, who firmly believed the unfortunate report was inserted intentionally. Indeed, the Editor is sure they gave him the credit, or rather the blame, of having brought about the change in the weather to cause their chagrin. At all events, the summer was approaching before the Editor had an opportunity of doing them a good turn, which he very willingly did, after which they met, and he does not remember who stood the liquor, but he is afraid each stood a round. It is said there is a place paved with good intentions. Editors, I think, do a good deal of paving for little thanks.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Newton Episode.

I cannot resist giving the following "episode," which was in private circulation about forty years ago, and which at the time deserved more publicity. The personages who figure in it have nearly all joined the majority, but many Newtonians and Ayr people both at home and abroad will guess the dramatis personæ. The only indication we may give to help to elucidate the personalities is to mention that among the Newton Freemen for generations there have been numerous Hunters, Moores, Bones, Woods, Grays, Reids, and latterly have been added Peter Smith, at that time senior Bailie, and Ferguson junior Bailie, with Arthur Lang and Alex. Weir prospective Bailies. Messrs Cuthbert of Ochiltree, Goudie, M'Crindle, and Shearer casually mentioned will also be known to many. The Freemen were alarmed at any attempt being made on their powers and privileges—such as they were— and were ready on all occasions to assert their dignity. Amalgamation with Ayr was not then thought of. In these reminiscences we will come to that subject again, but a strong feeling existed that some lighting and cleansing should be given to Newton and Wallacetown. Of course, those who wished to remain as they were, were accused of being lovers of "dirt and darkness," while those who advocated the adoption of the Act were blamed for a love of taxation. Both furnished excellent war cries. At all events, great excitement prevailed, and the proposed adoption of the Lindsay Police Act created no small stir. During the heat of the controversy the following "episode" had its genesis in M'Rae's School, but was never printed, doubtless from the want of funds, but more probably from the dread of being found out. It compares favourably with much of the doggerel issued by their seniors, and adds to the eclat of our school days. The production is worthy of the school and indicates in a way the amount of general intelligence that was rubbed into the youths at that famous "Alma Mater," and readers may note that the measure adopted is that of Milton's "Paradise Lost" which, mirabile dictu, was a favourite book in the highest class, and for the introduction of which many of the old scholars still shower blessings on the old "maister."

EPISODE IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE SIEGE OF TROY.

(Culled from British Poets by Martin Tupper, Jr..

Dedicated to Arthurius Langus, Esq.

Scene I.

Deep in a bed of softest down, which far
Outshone the wealth of Prestwick or of Ayr,
The Trojan Blacksmith lay, by thought depressed
To such a state, as laid clearly down,
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Vulcan's Soliloquy—
Hush! traitor conscience, and out, out brief light.
Go—DAY! Let darkness come again, and hide
Thee and thy damned supports, or better
Both hurl back with vengeance to thy native ISLE.

(Vanish Petitioners to the tune of "Good Day, Goody.")

I cannot rest, O Sleep! O gentle Sleep!
Nature's soft nurse once more return. 'Tis true
I've done the deed, but you will hear a noise,
For now my better self cries "I repent."
I am a man again, and so I'll show
Thy reasoning PANSMAN is not all in vain.
Yes, second Plato, thou didst reason well,
Else, whence this dread, so horrid in a Bailie,
Of falling into naught? I do confess
That in their document I did affix
My name; but what of that since now I know
That all its statements are pretentions?
Really, their object now is to reduce
The FORTY-EIGHT to nothingness; to send
Down to destruction this, our own noble bark
Of government, which now displays her own
BLUE PETER in the fore, and to supplant
It by some modern craft, o'ertopped belike,
By some Trade Union Jack, which soon we'd see
A sine inversed without a complement.
This will not, cannot, must not be, if our
Great self can interpose authority.
And what's this Act? What its pretensions?
Who of the Freemen dares to think that these
Intend to light, to cleanse, to pave or drain,

Supply the water to, or benefit the health
In any way in our domains, to which
No Act ere now applied, and where no law,
No rule, save that of our COMMUNITY,
So mild, so sweet, and easy to be borne,
Durst ever come? Stands Troja where it did?
Or breathes there within its bounds a man
Of holding a wise elected Oligoi?
The Press has told, in silence how we've reigned
Till persecution dragged us into fame
And chase us would from our own lands and make
Our ashes fly—no marble tell whither.

Chorus by the shades of the "Forty-eight"—
"Shrine of the mighty can it be
That this must be applied to thee.
Troja! no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell.
Yes self-abasement paves the way
From gentle BONDS and magnates GRAY."

There must be something rotten in your state
If ye will not behold in this attempt
To introduce this horrid, horrid act,
Well pictured forth a second timber horse,
Which we'd admit within our walls, its darts
Now hidden soon to see and feel, and in
These NOVI HOMINES, Commissioners,
Greecians a second time pent up, and soon
To be led forth for our destruction.

Chorus of the Shades—
"Troy nods from high and totters to the floor,
Soon read we Troy, but living Troy no more."

This last grand move to quicken you, I'll call
A special Beltane Court within our hall
Two hours before the meeting of snob TENNERS,
And there and then I'll work you so
That you'll adopt the just and ancient ordinance,
Enacting that no man who is unfree
Shall trade or manufacture in the bounds
Unless by special leave. That that will do,
And armed with that we'll drive the invaders back,
Show their commission a mere phantasy,
Seen by hot fancies of ill-balanced minds,
And order composite restore again.

Demon under Vulcan's bed sings—
"O! twice again to Freemen's cause return,
The Royal Bruce, the King of Half-Mile Burn."

Dark lightning flashed from Vulcan's eyes, when lo!
The cock crew thrice, the signal as they say
For day's approach. Then PETER wisely knew
That at this, horrid ghosts and supernaturals
Do fly away—down even to their abodes.
He winked and turned him twice, knowing full well
His visions past, and in his blankets muffling
Up his magisterial hams, resigned him
Into Morpheus' arms.

Scene II.—The Gathering of the Clans.

The scene is changed. The Newton bell is tolled,
Forthwith appeared from every rank and trade
The powers that erst in Newton held their "dails"
To hear proud Vulcan who, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Shone like a tower. Next him there came
The two young POLLUXES, "those lively stars,"
Accompanied by their father, TYNDAREUS,
Who at the board of BERRY STRAW—a sage,
From the same board the man of WEEDS,
Son of old Scotia's first great potentate
Now carrying on his back his tutelar god,
Saint Sarah, his beloved aunt, who holds
Between her jaws the seeming pipe of clay
Which long has braved the shock of stone and staff,
And leading by the hand ANCHISES, young,
A scion of an old VIRGINIAN stock,
He hurries from his native smoke—to smoke.
Him followed CULBERT, whose delightful seat
Is fair DAMASCUS, on the fertile banks
Of classic Lugar and of Burnock—lucid streams,
Once the reputed Provost of the place;
But oh! how fallen now! Then barren fields
Also gave up their gems, too oft passed over,
For OSSEUS, in his ancient chivalry,"
Preceded by his armour bearer JAMES,
Who waves on high a good Lochaber axe,
Walks forth with folded hands behind his back,
And wearing a vest and shining helm with which
The snow compared is black. Up gave thesea
For Venus like, and yet in hue not so

Unlike her martial husband, up DICKAX
Springs quick from the foam, a modern Cyclops.
Nor did the WOODS and MOORS keep back their due,
But bounteously sent forth PALUS and LIGNEUS
And those who under general name VENATOR
Will fill the land. Next from the beach came on
TRITOR, who's laid his weary bones among us.
Oh, though as Lucifer, not aye a friend,
Give him his bone to grind for charity.
With these in troop, or close behind, appeared
A crew who under names of old renown,
CIESIUS, TURNATOR, RUBENS and their train,
With others hard to name, came thundering on.
Last came the LAUREATE, who, on Newton shore,
"Unheard, unknown," his lays has oft let fall,
Whose stride majestic, and poor feet well spread,
Whose beard with frizzled hair implicit,
And eye in agony and frenzy rolled,
Proclaim at once Apollo's follower.
All these and more came flocking to the hall
Where, having waited one half hour as LAW
And use require, VULCAN outspoke his woe,
And all gave silence to the good old man,
When from his old armchair he thus began:—
"Friends, Forty-seven Freemen, lend me your ears.
I am no orator, as some here are,
But as you know me all, a plain, blunt man,
Who speaks right on. First, then, I'd have you hear
The royal words that gave you power to rule,
May they, those spoken to your sires, recall,
Awake, arise, or now for ever fall."

Clerk reads—
Cum potestate etiam et plenaria libertate burgensibus et inhabitantibus de Neutoun.

Vulcan—
Stay, Sir. No Gaelic but plain, good Scotch is all that we require.

Clerk—
With power also and full liberty to the Burgesses and Inhabitants.

Vulcan—
Inhabitants! Sir fool what do you read?

Clerk—
From Charter of King James the Sixth.

Vulcan—
Bruce, Sir, we know, but who is this King James?

The Charter of the Bruce it is we want,
Which all do know was granted to the men
Who gained for him the Bannock victory.

Clerk—
No such I find among the papers of the town.

Vulcan—
You what? If you have not this Charter drawn,
Then tell I you, your occupations gone.
A Clerk we've had—when shall we see his like?—
Who always came with papers well prepared;
And better had it been, I see, if those
Who wished to poke themselves into your place
Had been appointed. Without this Charter,
Tojans, I must go on, for 'tis no time
To wait. Of this rebellion you have heard,
This vile attempt to introduce an Act
By which we will be saddled with a tax,
Not as the movers say of sixpence—No,
But sixty in the £, as time will show.
If we're the Freemen whom the Bruce made free,
And all are slaves besides, is't possible
You will accept these terms? The day was once
When this good chair was topped with bloody RED
And treason could not brook, come whence it might;
And now its mounting being GRAY presages
Failing strength. Are then thy BONES grown marrowless,
Thy MOORS reduced to waste, thy WOODS mere stumps,
Thy HUNTERS lazy loungers in their stalls,
And all so far ground down by wear,
That you're content under your figs to sit
And smoke the pipe of peace? Unworthy sons
Of men like Newton's noble forty-eight,
Who just five hundred years and fifty more
For us did gain our rights, our name, our lands,
Will ye become subordinate to men
Who here are mere intruders, or retain
The name of Freemen without being free?
If ye would Freemen be, then follow me;
Let's free old Troy of such infernal pests.
Advance your standards, draw your well-worn swords,
Let CRINDLE, drum, and bell sound furiously,
The words Freemen! Freedom! and Victory!

Tritor—
On this matter we would thee hear again;
Meantime the Sheriff calls.

Vulcan—
Then am I quite undone. My last appeal
I make. Behold you here the official sword,
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a bailie's thigh. With this and by myself
I'll send that meeting to destruction. (Draws.)
Out! thou avenging minister on whom
The prayers of saints and sinners have been said,
Show not by GOUD-EH, no, you'll not be foiled.
But as the church sincere desires,
You'll be a dread to evil-doers all,
A praise and mighty guard to doing well,
Swear here I do, upon this goodly blade,
That it shall never sheathed be, until
By force of this 'ere little arm, I sink
This motley crew and all their urgers on,
In hole that's called the STINKING; also I'll cause
Freemen to stand who stand, let fall who fall.
Come, SHEARER! thou faithful among the faithless,
Now to the charge and mow the traitors down,
Make Troy confess, that two at least
This day have done their duty."
He shook on high his aged blade
And shouted "Victory;
Charge Freemen charge, on SHEARER on,"
Were the last words of Hephestion.

CHAPTER XIV.

Literature Half-a-Century Ago.

My gossip relating to the local Press of the middle of last century is naturally followed by a chapter on the literature in general circulation at the same time. It is common nowadays in extolling the new serials and the general literature of the present day to draw comparisons and to point out the great improvement which has taken place in the publications in general circulation now as compared with those of the fifties and sixties of the last century. I think this is somewhat overdone. That an improvement has taken place goes without saying. Paper is much cheaper, and improved machinery has almost brought to perfection the art of printing. But it is going too far to allege that fifty or sixty years ago the general reading of the people was practically confined to scurrilous literature, to blood-curdling stories, Jack Sheppard and Burke and Hare narratives, "penny dreadfuls" that were immoral and irreligious. If this were so I was in happy ignorance of it, and I must have been very carefully nurtured and brought up on the most proper literary pabulum, and the naughty bad books kept very much out of my sight. Then, as now, there were obscene publications. There are always publishers ready to pander to depraved tastes. Then, as now, those same depraved tastes would create a demand and, of course, find a supply of a class of books and serials highly discreditable, but that was by no means so rampant as is alleged. Certainly the better class of works published is rather more prominent now than then, but it is unfair to our grandparents to allege that things were sovery much worse that what was actually the case. There is no doubt that now we have sixpenny, shilling, half-crown, and crown volumes which for excellence could not be imagined then. Shilling volumes were known, but they made a very poor show compared with the excellent volumes we have now freely issued even at sixpence. I only wish to correct the impression that the press of the first half of last century was highly immoral and irreligious, and that only in the last half the change to a better and purer literature had taken place. What it may have been a hundred years ago, or away back in Burns' time, I will not venture to say, but I have reason to believe that the feeling that we are always a great deal better than our fathers and grandfathers has always existed, while if the truth were known our improve-

ment has been very gradual, and in some respects a comparison is not always in our favour. Education was by no means so perfect then. Many could not read at all; the demand for and the supply of books was consequently very much less. Many households even of a respectable class had very few volumes especially for the young to read. Our school books almost comprised the juvenile stock of literature. The total number of booksellers, stationers, and newsagents in Ayr did not exceed four, and about the oldest of these was Mr Samuel Irvine, who had commenced business in Ayr in 1832. I think he was the principal newsagent, conducting what was then considered a very large business, which he managed himself with very little assistance. He had a circulating library, but it was very small. Many a working man now has a larger and better. Still it was large enough for all the lending business. I got the substance of that library, though in a very imperfect form, during our school hours, from his son Samuel, who died ere reaching manhood. I am afraid he studied many of the works in that library more diligently than his lessons. During the arithmetic hours in school, young Samuel invariably sat next me while we were doing our "sums." I have said WE were doing them; to be more correct I should say I was doing them and my neighbour was engaged transferring my figures to his slate, while he was pouring into my ears delightful narratives, his own version of the wondrous tales in his father's library. The narratives were somewhat mixed, and we were both highly patriotic. Wallace and Bruce got much mixed up with his stories. Wellington and Nelson also were favourites. Somehow we had no regard for dates, they lived about the same time. Wallace frequently knocked Napoleon into a cocked hat; Wellington, of course, was more than a match for Bonaparte, but with William Wallace he had not the ghost of a chance. I am not sure but the statue of Wallace which stands yet on his father's property at the corner of Newmarket Street was not placed there to commemorate some great victory achieved by Wallace over the combined forces of the whole of Europe commanded by Napoleon, Tell, and Julius Cæsar. Nelson took charge of the sea, of course, he had no rival. He finished off the Spanish Armada; after that there were no further worlds to conquer. I question much if the fiction poured into my ears in those far-off days was not then more enjoyable than any with which I have been delighted since.

I have dismissed all my school days' gossip in the chapters on Schools and Schoolmasters, so now return to the

subject of the present chapter, giving my reminiscences of the reading which was characteristic of the time. I may call it my juvenile time. I have already admitted the great progress we have made since then, giving due regard to the fact that books then were not so profane as alleged, and that our progress has not been so great as supposed. Be that as it may, however, as far as the literature of half-a-century ago is concerned some facts connected with it are highly instructive. Admitting the great improvement which has taken place, and granting that a very decided advantage has taken place more particularly in our serials, our monthly magazines, and in our cheap editions of the best works of the best authors, yet it must not be imagined that the new has entirely cut out the old, and that all that is now good is of recent date, and the old has entirely been superceded. My desire is now to compare what was prominent then with what holds a high position at the present time, and probably we will find that after all the "good old times" have not, even in the matter of literature, been so much changed.

I would commence first of all with "Blackwood's Magazine." It was started in 1817 as a half-crown magazine, and it remains so still. It ranked first then and it does so now. I think it is increased in size by 24 or 32 pages, but that is all. "Blackwood" always commanded the support of the first of living authors. I remember reading it upwards of fifty years ago, Bulwer Lytton's "Caxton," and "My Novel," as they appeared monthly. I often wonder since how many of our best standard novels have first of all appeared in "Blackwood." Bulwer Lytton's novels appeared without their author's name attached. It was the works themselves which gave the author his fame, not the author's name which induced readers to take to the works just because of the fame of their author. I mention these novels only, but there were many others, now of world-wide fame, and, as is well-known, all "Blackwood's" general articles are of the best and have always been, so that as far as old Ebony is concerned, the present day cannot boast as having made such great advances over the past. "Blackwood" has seen few changes, yet it stands A1 yet. As an Edinburgh firm the publishers have been established for over a century. Few houses have such a variety of valuable copyrights, and few send out their works in such handsome form, and considering their value, at such attractive prices. Fifty years ago it was the same. It is an open question whether it is enterprise and good judgment on the part of the publishers

which has maintained their magazine in such a proud position, or whether the high standing of the magazine has given the firm its high position. Either, I presume will form good enough reason, and I do not suppose either will be disputed. "Reprinted from 'Blackwood's Magazine'" is a good certificate for excellence, and many of the best of these works are in circulation now in cheap tditions.

It may be put down to a Scotch partiality—a clanishness—that the next serial I pick up for comparison with present day magazines is "Chambers' Journal." Now, with all our boasted twentieth century great values, putting "Chambers'" into one scale, where do modern magazines come in, and for value is there a question of the favourite of 50 years ago being out of date now? For here we have "Chambers," established 1832 (same year as the "Ayr Observer"—there was more than a Reform Bill that year), at the same size, same price, same popularity, and held in as much esteem now as it has been since it was commenced, and seemingly holding its own without effort against all comers. There is nothing more remarkable in the way of a popular journal than the high position which this serial has retained, all its original characteristics; while others have doubled in size, reduced in price, and come through inumerable alterations, yet "Chambers'," with but slight alterations and an improvement in the quality of its paper, has altered in neither shape, size, nor price, and yet even now it is superior in almost every respect to many of the most popular journals of the present day, and holds its own in public favour with the most energetic rivals. There is no want of enterprise on the part of the publishers, but it simply has not been necessary to put on any spurt, to increase its size, or reduce its price; as it was at the beginning so it remains as good as ever. Messrs W. & R. Chambers have issued educational works, dictionaries, an encyclopædia (unsurpassed for excellence), historical, biographical, and other works, equal in quantity and quality to the issues of the largest publishers. Their journal, however, like "Blackwood's Magazine," continues the even tenor of its way, maintaining its high excellence, always up-to-date, and its name familiar as a household word in many quarters. Fifty years ago it certainly had not so many rivals, nor any so formidable as it has now, yet even with the best it remains as it did in my younger days, a favourite everywhere in spite of alll opposition. Notwithstanding my Scotch leanings, however, I must not hold up "Blackwood" and "Chambers" as the only serials of the middle of the last century, which have survived, to prove

that we had within our reach literature which can be held as comparing favourably with what we have now. My argument is to show that what was good of old has survived, and is perfectly fit to hold its own still with the best we have now. My argument is to show that what was good of old has survived, and is perfectly fit to hold its own still with the best we have. I wish the public mind to be disabused of the idea that long ago penny dreadfuls and secularist literature held sway. Scotland at least could hold its head up, and though London now claims some superiority it is because Edinburgh firms have now opened offices there, and because Scotsmen are to be found there in every important position. It would be matter of surprise to many if inquiry were made as to how many sons of the North occupy important positions in the principal publishing firms in London; and to say the least of it, among the contributors to the press, both in newspapers and in general literature, Scotland—but perhaps this is the proverbial conceit of Scotsmen—has its fair proportion everywhere. Regarding the London magazines of the time of which I am writing the great bulk have succumbed, and have not been able to hold their own like those I have mentioned, or new competitors have taken their place. The half-crown magazines, of which there were several, have disappeared with the exception of Blackwood. The shilling magazine only put in an appearance about 1860. MacMillan led off in November, 1859, and has continued to hold its own in a good position ever since. It too like others has contributed to enable its publishers to rank among the highest in the Metropolis. Bentley's Miscellany, for a long time a favourite half-crown magazine, succumbed before the shilling raiders, and was first of all merged into Temple Bar, a shilling magazine started some time after MacMillan, but eventually has become the property of that firm as well. The large publishing business connected with it was also merged into MacMillan's, giving the firm the hold of some of the most valuable copyrights and a publishing business ranking among the largest in the Kingdom. There is every appearance likewise that this is likely to be continued. The Cornhill Magazine appeared two months after the MacMillan, but before Temple Bar, and was edited by Thackeray and published by Messrs Smith, Elder & Co. This firm published other magazines prior to this, but special efforts were put forward to give the Cornhill a prominence which few had reached. It has been a success from the first, and the firm which publishes it continues to rank among the principal publishing firms in London. A very short time

elapsed between the starting of the shilling magazines and the almost total disappearance of those at half-a-crown. Many of these, however, rapidly gave way before the sixpenny magazines, which now occupy a very wide field.

It is remarkable, however, that even among the sixpenny magazines of the present day held in the highest favour, there are those which occupied a similar position half-a-century ago. About that time the London Religious Tract Society, which had for fifty years been publishing an immense amount of literature and doing a great deal of good work, ventured into the field with a serial, which at once sprung into popularity and has maintained it ever since. The title was very happily chosen, "The Leisure Hour," with its motto—"Behold in those which leisure hours demand." The title was a happy thought, and equally happy and successful have been the efforts made to give the venture that success and prosperity to which it has now attained. I think that success must have exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. From the first it has occupied a high position, finding its way into the homes of rich and poor and welcomed by all. A very few years later the "Sunday at Home" was issued from the same office, and met with a similar success. The two magazines supplied a want for every day in the week, and it is not too much to say that these two magazines have had a greater effect in supplying us with pure literature and counteracting that of an inferior kind than the Society has accomplished with all the tracts they have issued. They are edited in an admirable manner, and the greatest bulk of the works which appear in them in a serial form appear later in volumes, which command a wide circulation even after being read by the thousands who have read them as they first appeared. The "Boys' Own Paper" and the "Girls' Own" afterwards appeared, and other smaller periodicals, all of great value now emanating from the same great publishing Office; and it can be safely said that every household, and every member of the household, can find a supply of all necessary wants in the publications of the Religious Tract Society. At all events they go to prove that what was really in demand fifty years ago is only meeting the same favour now which existed then, and what was popular then is popular still.

There were many apparently flourishing periodicals then which have now disappeared, such as the "London Journal," "Reynolds' Miscellany," and others, which had wide circulations. These have doubtless gone on account of the better, healthier literature, which even then competed with them, and others of recent date, have, to

the advantage of the community, taken their place. Their departure is not to be regretted, and if there has been a fickleness in their treatment, it is matter to be pleased at that the really good magazines then in existence have been continued and are held in such high estimation at the present day. It was about that time also that "Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper" put in an appearance, and at once became a success and formed the nucleus of the series of publications issued by the great publishing firm of Cassell and Co., Limited. Nothing could be more remarkable than the progress of this firm, and it affords another proof of what I am contending that we had good literature fifty years ago, and if it was mixed with evil, it is the good which has survived and the worthless which has gone o the wall. It says much for the intelligence and love of decent literature of the middle of the nineteenth century that there existed discrimination to know a good thing when they got it, and that Cassell's at once sprang into that popularity which it has retained till now. Cassell's was always a success. This magazine for all the week very soon had as a Sunday companion "The Quiver," which has always held a high position among magazines of a religious character. Some of the best light literature I know of has appeared in it. Mrs Henry Wood has run several of her best novels in the "Quiver," in company with those of writers of the highest reputation. "Little Folks" was also added to the number of the firm's serials, and, as its name implies, it is for the young of the family. "Chums," a boy's magazine, has no superior, and now there exists the new "Penny Magazine" and "Cassell's Saturday Journal," making up a total of serials issued by this firm covering every field. The volumes issued by Cassells from authors brought into contact with the firm through their magazines give them many of the most valuable copyrights of the day, so that as publishers Cassells hold a position which might well be the envy of many much longer established. In taking note of these magazines which have survived all their rivals at the time when they commenced and now reap a reward of great success for being conducted on sound principles since their first numbers appeared, I have only to add another to complete the list of periodicals, each in their sphere specially noteworthy.

This serial, though mentioned last, is not least, and has maintained a remarkably high position for upwards of sixty years; I refer to the well-known "Family Herald." It was very popular half-a-century ago, and is still as popular as ever. It is the oldest, and in many respects the best, of all the domestic magazines of useful information

and amusement established prior to 1850, and is the only one now remaining of the numerous penny serials with which it was in competition in the first half of last century. It has outlived all its rivals of sixty years ago, for all the numerous penny magazines and journals of my boyhood have disappeared. Other imitations—in some cases worthy—have come and gone since then, but the "Family Herald" remains as popular, perhaps more popular, now than then. It ranked with the cheapest and best from the first, and it holds the same high position to-day. It is singular how little it has changed. Up till a few years ago it remained the same size, price, and arrangement, though all the time we are told magazines nowadays are so much improved and have taken such strides in half-a-century. Within the past few years, however, while it stil remains the old magazine, and in no way varied, it has had added to it what is practically a supplement of additional attractive matter, doubling it in size and bringing it up to what seems to be the largest penny magazine in existence. It is still, however, the old "Family Herald," as the "Saturday Review" says, it stands at the head both in age and popularity of all the penny serials. It generally contains in each number, as it has done for sixty years, two serial tales, one complete story, an interesting essay, recipes, poetry, varieties, and answers to correspondents. That these have always been of a high order has been amply verified by the fact that they have all been reproduced in threepenny, sixpenny, and shilling volumes, commanding a sale equal to the best issued by any publishers. Continued success like this could not be achieved without distinct merit. No pandering to the tastes of any section or any temporary spurt could have attained to this distinguished position. Merit, perseverance, sound judgment, and paying handsomely for their contributions, could only have secured it, and then, best of all, continued it so long. A few years ago a clergyman incautiously attacked the "Family Herald" as one of the immoral, irreligious, and worthless serials—"a penny dreadful" in fact, and anything but a good FAMILY paper. The editor took up the cudgels in its defence, and asked on what grounds such a tirade was indulged in. The controversy was a somewhat short one. The reverend assailant had to admit he had never read it; he had condemned it on hearsay; he had denounced a thing he knew nothing about, so had to retract and apologise. Faith is a good thing, and this clergyman probably was sound in his own faith, but faith is a bad thing when it comes to be a belief in bad opinion; it is a want of charity, which should not be indulged in since it is only a belief in

a bad, perhaps interested, report, the falsity of which could be easily verified. It is a pity some minds should be so ready to believe a bad report when common honesty would take the trouble to verify its truth or otherwise. The wicked may flourish like a green bay tree, for a time. I am not aware, however, that the flourishing is so continuous as the magazine I have now noticed as having been popular sixty years ago, and continued till the present day. There are none like the trees planted by a river, or a house built on a rock—they stand; and their power of endurance being well founded enables them to withstand all attacks and meet all rivals.

Each of the magazines I have noticed as marking the prominent features of the literature of their times, competed with and routed the "penny dreadful" we hear so much about as being the representative literature of the day. I think the stigma may be removed now which holds up these days as degenerate and its literature as impure. Why that opinion should ever be held is all the more remarkable that now we are much more broadminded regarding what we read, and are by no means so straight-laced as we think our grandparents should have been. So far from being lax then as to what our reading should consist of, we were if anything more restricted. We had not then quite decided that novel reading was altogether quite the correct thing. There were many who would not allow a novel in their house; and as for reading novels on a Sunday, why there would have been session-meetings called for discipline. To have proclaimed from a pulpit that novels could be read with propriety on a Sunday would have been denounced as downright blasphemy, but now it is complaisantly pronounced commonsense. Rather than remain under that impression of the middle of the nineteenth century we should judge fairly and be content with the assurance that while we have more choice in our literature, yet with all the variety placed before us, and many of great excellence, the impression still remains that the serials I have mentioned maintain a pre-eminence still. They are only the continuance of those which obtained popular favour in the days of which I am giving my reminiscences. Novels constitute the great bulk of the reading of the present day, yet the works of the great writers of the first half of the last century continue to be issued in large popular editions. The great names familiar then have not been excelled since. Most of those even of modern date have appeared in the serials I have mentioned as popular then. Altogether it is in the mere matter of improved paper and quantity of it we presently excel. The literature I refer to was in no way inferior.

CHAPTER XVI.

POLITICAL.

My reminiscences of Ayr—ecclesiastical, educational, and literary—may now be considered complete, and I can now indulge at greater length in gossip on what I remember politically, municipally, and socially. I may incidentally return to those first mentioned, for circumstances will arise in which it will be necessary to bring individuals together on special occasions. Clergymen are often found dabbling in politics; teachers often interfere with matters they might well let alone, custom making them treat all around them as if they were children, only created to be ruled; and the literary personages, as every one knows, think themselves superior to everybody. Being an exception, of course, I only take my own way and give my reminiscences in a way to please myself, and being responsible to no one, I now arrive at my political gossip. Politics is the least tempting of the subjects I will dwell on, and I will get it off my hand as quickly as possible. There is excitement enough at the time of an election without carrying it on to a time which should at least be a "close time" for strong discordant feelings. It is so far satisfactory that the rowdyism now attending an election is very much abated, indeed as compared with what it was fifty years ago it is practically abandoned. Candidates, even in the heat of a contest, can now go about with perfect safety, scarcely a cheer or a groan being elicited as they pass along the street. Even the strongest opponents may be seen hob-nobbing together, and as for hostile meetings, attended even with horse play, such a thing is seldom heard of. Different societies send out emissaries to lecture at street corners, setting forth the folly and wickedness of their opponents. I think even the general body of electors have got the length of caring very little for their tirades. I am not sure but that the exaggeration of many of these street corner orators does more harm to their friends than to their opponents. Feeling as I do a strong conviction that we now need some revision of a policy which was adopted sixty years ago, and carried admittedly to an extreme, I think there can be no harm in making an "inquiry" into it to ascertain if it could not be improved upon. Much as I do like to dwell on the guid auld times, I am not so strait-laced as to hold out that they cannot be improved upon. In a world of change we must change with it, and improve as we go

along. Even in this matter of change it can be fairly alleged that there is a marked change in both parties. In olden times the Conservative party were pretty much against any change whatever, but now the great bulk of the party court inquiry in many ways, and seemingly are prepared to go in for changes even in matters which have hitherto been looked upon as sound as Gospel truth. On the other hand, there are those who hitherto have been staunch Liberals, and who would have done anything for change, even to abolishing the decalogue itself, but are now staunch upholders of things as they are. The Gospel itself may go, but the gospel according to Cobden, that must stand, right or wrong. I may be reminded here that I should not venture into political discussion and show any partizanship. I am only saying that both sides have changed, but at the same time having said my say I will not encroach further, and only refer to the characteristics of elections in former days. As I have mentioned, the tirades of political agents nowadays are little attended to; it was not so in the olden times. I remember the time when a heated orator denouncing his opponents would with the greatest difficulty obtain a hearing. Rowdyism was very rampant. The smashing of windows was not un common at election times; a bonnet was a much safer thing to wear than a hat. It was nothing uncommon to see a hat knocked over a partisan's eyes, and considered a very striking argument. I have seen some of the most popular men (at other times) stoned and obliged to take refuge in the nearest house or any shelter he could get to escape the excited crowd. Gratitude was always forgotten at election times. This is very different from the last election, when a noisy street orator could shout away for half an hour, denouncing all who did not hold his views as being unfit to live. There were those who would starve the poor working man, making the threepenny loaf a shilling, besides ruining the trade of the country—(no statement is too strong in a political discussion). Probably, also, he would be denouncing the drink traffic, enlarging upon the murderous aims of all those engaged in it, and even holding up one of the candidates as driving hundreds of thousands down to a certain region, and all at the working man's expense. (The working man is a very important personage at elections.) But so little, however, is this taken seriously that hundreds pass on without wanting to hear what the orator is paid for denouncing, and the few who have gathered around take their departure when he is finished. So little was one speaker at last

election taken notice of that shortly after, in making his way to another corner for another outburst, he could quietly step into a public-house on the way and obtain a "stiff one" to stiffen him for the next harangue to denounce a habit he so frequently indulged in himself. I need not attempt to moralise on the absurdity apart from the unfairness of the policy which in former years used physical force to compel the holder of a different opinion to change it. Smash his windows, knock his hat over his eyes, you make a martyr of him but cannot convert him. Make a Conservative become a stiff, unbending Tory on account of such ill-usage. When a rowdy lot assault any one without reason, it does not tend to make him a friend of his opponents, and look upon them as a body deserving a warm friendly feeling. The modern device of street corner orating is, however, as ineffective, though, perhaps, more harmless.

A brief record of all the Ayrshire elections from 1832 till the present day will be interesting. Commencing with the County, I give the result of the election of 18th May, 1831, to show the number of the old constituency, the electoral qualification being much extended by the Reform Act of 1832, as will be seen from the result of that election:

Colonel Blair of Blair.	73
Mr R. A. Oswald of Auchincruive, ...	36
Majority, ...	37

On the first election after 1832 with an extended constituency Colonel Blair, the previous Tory, was again opposed by Mr Oswald as a Whig (but whose principles would now be pronounced as quite high enough Conservative) with the following result, showing the change in the size of the constituency as well as the other change:—

Mr Oswald, ...	2152
Colonel Blair, ...	324
Majority, ...	1828

The next election took place in 1835, Mr Oswald having retired when Captain Dunlop of Dunlop stood in the same interest, and was opposed by Sir J. A. Cathcart of Carleton, a Conservative, with some change in the result:—

Captain Dunlop, ...	1435
Sir J. A. Cathcart, ...	829
Majority, ...	606

A still further change marked the next election, which took place in 1839, when Captain Dunlop was opposed by Lord Kelburne, who still further reduced the majority, the returns being:—

Captain Dunlop, ...	1559
Lord Kelburne, ...	1370
Majority, ...	189

This was altogether overturned at the next election in 1839. Captain Dunlop having died, Lord Kelburne again stood, opposed by Mr Campbell of Craigie, in the Whig interest, and Mr Craig, an erratic merchant in Kilmarnock, who, it may be remarked, carried the popular vote at the hustings, but the result showed:—

Lord Kelburne, ...	1758
Mr Campbell, ...	1296
Mr Craig, ...	46
Majority, ...	462

By the demise of the Earl of Glasgow in 1843 Lord Kelburne was elevated to the peerage, and Mr Alex. Oswald of Auchincruive, a Conservative, and a supporter of Sir Robert Peel, was returned without opposition. He was again returned in 1847 without a contest, but on account of some differences in the party at next election in 1852 he did not offer himself for re-election, and the contest lay between Col. James Hunter Blair, yr., of Blairquhan, and Mr Cardwell, a defeated Liberal candidate at Liverpool, with the following result:—

Colonel Blair, ...	1301
Mr Cardwell, ...	1200
Majority, ...	101

Colonel Blair fell at the Battle of Inkerman, 5th November, 1854, and an election took place on the 28th December following. Mr Oswald came forward as the Liberal candidate, and Sir James Fergusson was brought forward as the Conservative candidate, while he was serving with his regiment in the Crimea. The result was as follows:—

Sir James Fergusson, ...	1510
Mr Oswald, ...	1381
Majority, ...	101

The next election occurred in 1857, when Lord James Stuart, uncle to the Marquess of Bute, was brought forward to oppose Sir James, with the following result:—

Lord James Stuart,	...	...	...	1663
Sir James Fergusson,	...	...	...	1458
Majority,	...	...	...	205

The exclusion of Sir James Fergusson was not of long duration, however. Lord James Stuart died in 1859, when the contest which followed lay between Sir James and Mr Campbell of Craigie, and resulted as follows:—

Sir James Fergusson,	...	...	...	1687
Mr Campbell,	...	...	...	1641
Majority,	...	...	...	46

In 1865 Sir James was re-elected without opposition. Prior to the next election in 1868, a Redistribution Bill gave Ayrshire two members, and Sir James Fergusson was appointed Governor of Australia, so both County seats had to be filled by new men. I may as well complete my record of the election results and follow the elections in South Ayrshire. Before doing so, however, and while these sheets are going through the press, I cannot resist supplementing these election results by a special notice of Sir James Fergusson. The sad intimation of the fearful disaster at Jamaica from earthquake, involving the destruction of the capital there, had also caused the death of Sir James. Among numerous tributes paid to his memory, both at home and abroad, I take the following from the "Notes on Current Topics" in the "Ayr Observer," from the pen of the writer of these reminiscences:—

The Late Sir James.

None of our county men of the nineteenth century will be so long remembered as the late Sir James Fergusson. His public career extended well over the half century, and the many prominent positions he occupied brought him in touch with so many and for such a length of time that he will be remembered as Sir James even without the surname being added to it. From his youth upwards he was held in the highest estimation. He was early marked out for a military as well as a political career. He was an officer and a Parliamentary candidate before he was of age. At all events he could not have been much over twenty-one when he was first elected member for the County of Ayr. He was a notoriously hard worker, never sparing himself.

There were few more active members of Parliament, and while he was so he was diligent in attending to county matters, thinking nothing of leaving one night to attend a meeting in Ayr and returning the following night to his Parliamentary duties. Even last month he left his seat in Ayrshire in the early morning by the milk train to be able to attend a meeting in Glasgow in which he took a warm interest. Whatever he undertook to do he did it well, and he was never afraid of undertaking anything. He was prominent in many commercial enterprises as well, and it was in connection with one of these he came to his tragic end. In all he was deservedly and highly popular. During the past fifty years I came frequently into contact with him, and really could not help liking him. His late rejection in Manchester was a sad blow to him, though it was well known that but for the strong hold he had obtained there he would gladly have been member for South Ayrshire. At the same time he would on no account have stood in the way of any other local candidate who had claims on the seat, and both in the county and in the burgh he was glad at all times to come to the assistance of the Unionist candidate. Though beyond the three score and ten there is no doubt Sir James retained the desire to return to Parliament. I do not know the private workings of the political centres, and I only venture to give my own views, which may be correct or, being unauthorised, may be wide of the mark. I took the opportunity, however, on a late occasion at a dinner at which Sir James presided to express the wish that history in his case and my own would repeat itself. Upwards of fifty years ago I had supported him in the first contest for Ayrshire, and I expressed the hope that I would be able again to do something similar with a like result. Whatever may have been the intention of the party, I could see that my anticipations were far from being unwelcome to the worthy baronet. Man proposes, however, and the awful, tragic event at Jamaica has closed the remarkable career of one of Ayrshire's greatest sons. As young Sir James of long ago, and old Sir James as he has been looked upon now for some years, I have to mourn the loss of one for whom I always had the highest regard. He was a brave as well as a good man. He never shirked a duty, and he died in harness. He paraded one June morning in the Crimea with five officers and 120 men; the day afterwards, the battle of Inkerman fought and won, he paraded with fifteen men. Fifty-three years later, still fearless of danger, he met his fate, far from the home which mourns him.

South Ayrshire.

At the first election in South Ayrshire after it formed an electoral division, Mr Oswald of Auchencruive was adopted as the Liberal candidate, and Colonel Alexander of Ballochmyle as the Conservative. About two months, however, previous to the election Mr Oswald died, and Sir David Wedderburn entered the field. The result of the election was as follows:—

Sir D. Wedderburn, ...	1416
Colonel Alexander, ...	1391
Majority, ...	25

The next election took place in 1874, when Sir David Wedderburn, after consulting with his committee, intimated he would not seek re-election, and Colonel Alexander was returned without opposition.

In 1880 another election took place, when Col. Alexander was opposed by the Hon. North de C. Dalrymple with the following result:—

Colonel Alexander	1830
Hon. North Dalrymple	1583
Majority	247

The next election took place in 1885, following a great extension of the Suffrage Act, when Mr Wason was brought forward to oppose the Colonel, with this result:—

Mr Wason	7357
Colonel Alexander	5946
Majority	1411

This Parliament was of very short duration, Mr Gladstone bringing in the Irish Home Rule Bill, which drove Mr Chamberlain, Lord Hartington, Mr John Bright, Mr Goschen, and other leading Liberals into opposition. Mr Wa son threw in lot with Mr Gladstone, and the election took place in July, 1886, with the following result:—

Hon. G. R. Vernon	6123
Mr Wason	6118
Majority	5

A disolution of Parliament took place in July, 1892, when Sir William Arrol was adopted as the Unionist candidate, but was rather late in entering the field. The result of the election was:—

Mr Wason	6335
Sir William Arrol	6332
Majority	197

At the next election in 1895 the result was:—

Sir Wm. Arrol	6875
Mr E. Wason	6325
Majority	550

I need not go further, but come to

North Ayrshire.

The first election here, in 1847, resulted in a Liberal victory as follows:—

Mr Finnie (L)	1397
Mr R. Montgomerie (C)	1322
Majority	75

In 1875, however, Mr Montgomerie reversed this decision as follows:—

Mr R. Montgomerie	1563
Mr Finnie	1301
Majority	262

In 1880 Mr Montgomerie intimated that he would not seek re-election, which induced two new candidates to enter the field, and the election again resulted in a Conservative victory, the numbers being:—

Mr Cochran-Patrick (C)	1636
Mr J. B. Balfour (L)	1581
Majority	55

In 1885, however, this was again reversed, the election at this time resulting as follows:—

Hon. Hugh F. Elliott	5700
Mr Cochran-Patrick	4740
Majority	960

Prior to the general election of 1892 Mr Elliott intimated that he would not seek re-election, which again introduced new candidates into the field, when the constituency again wobbled, the Hon. Thos. Cochrane, brother of Lord Dundonald, being opposed by Sir Wm. Wedderburn, brother of the former member for South Ayrshire. The result was:—

Hon. Thos. Cochrane (C)	5346
Sir Wm. Wedderburn (L)	4898
Majority	448

At the general election in 1895 Mr Wm. Robertson, Ayr, was brought forward, but was unsuccessful, the result being:—

Hon. Thos. Cochrane	5612
Mr Wm. Robertson	4912
Majority	710

The following election made no change. The Hon. Thos. Cochrane will be difficult to shift.

Ayr District of Burghs.

The not-to-be-envied characteristic of "wobbling" which is now attributed to the Ayr Burghs did not always obtain. From 1835 till 1852 we were represented continuously by Lord James Stuart, and from 1852 till 1874 Mr E. H. J. Crawford held the seat. Mr Campbell of Craigie retained it through three contested elections, and in all likelihood would have retained it much longer but for his death, which took place in 1888. It may be noted also as partly accounting for the "wobbling," that the majority of the contests, have been very close. 7, 9, 14, 16, 17, and other narrow margins indicate a very close fight, giving good reason for the fight being renewed, the change of a very few votes altering the returns. My readers, however, will be able to judge fairly enough of the character of the changes, and form their own conclusions—while making allowances for local influences and popular cries—as to how these changes have come about. The following are the results of the elections since 1832, the initial letter signifying Conservative, Radical, Whig, or Unionist:—

December, 1832.

Hon. J. F. Kennedy (W)	375
Dr. Taylor (R)	165
Mr Cruickshank (C)	33
Majority	210

January, 1833.

Lord James Stuart (W)	338
Mr Johnstone (R)	329
Majority	10

August, 1837.

Lord James Stuart	368
Mr Johnstone	351
Majority	17

Lord James Stuart was returned unopposed in 1841, and again in 1847. In 1852 he withdrew from the representation of the burgh, and the election resulted in the following return:—

Mr Crawford (R)	338
Mr Boyle (C)	329
Majority	9

In 1857 Mr Crawford was returned unopposed, and again in 1859. In 1865 Mr A. H. Oswald of Auchincruive was induced to enter the lists against him, the Radical party being thus divided, with the following result:—

Mr Crawford	576
Mr Oswald	501
Majority	65

In 1868 Mr James Anderson, Q.C., another Liberal, was brought forward to oppose him, and the result was:—

Mr Crawford	1116
Mr Anderson	1025
Majority	91

In 1874 Sir William Montgomerie Cuningham of Corsehill, a Conservative, was brought forward to oppose Mr Crawford, and was successful, the result being:—

Sir Wm. Cuningham	1697
Mr Crawford	1683
Majority	14

In 1880, however, the Liberals united on a local candidate, Mr Campbell of Craigie, who was returned with a great majority. The numbers were:—

Mr Campbell (L)	2303
Sir Wm. Cuningham (C)	1420
Majority	883

In 1885 another contest took place, with the following result:—

Mr Campbell (L), ...	2460
Mr Malcolm Low (C), ...	2218
Majority, ...	342

After this, Mr Campbell joined the Liberal Unionist party, and in 1886 the Radicals brought forward Captain Sinclair to oppose him, and the election resulted:—

Mr Campbell, ...	2673
Captain Sinclair, ...	1498
Majority, ...	1175

After this the "wobbling" commenced. Mr Campbell died, and Mr Sinclair, an ex-Free Church minister, was brought forward as a Radical, and the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, a son of Lord Shaftesbury, was nominated as a Liberal Unionist, the result being:—

Mr Sinclair, ...	2321
Hon. E. Ashley, ...	2268
Majority, ...	53

Mr Sinclair some time after found it necessary to resign his seat, when Mr Somervell, of Sorn, came forward as a Conservative and Mr Routledge, publisher, as a Radical. Result:—

Mr Somervell, ...	2610
Mr Routledge, ...	2480
Majority, ...	130

The next election in 1892 resulted as follows:—

Mr Birkmyre (R), ...	2760
Mr Somervell (C), ...	2753
Majority, ...	7

And in 1895 the result was:—

Mr Orr Ewing (C), ...	3057
Mr Birkmyre (R), ...	2722
Majority, ...	335

At the next election Mr Orr Ewing retained his seat by a considerably increased majority over Colonel Browne, and the last election is too recent to need further comment.

The election of 1852 was perhaps the most interesting election of the century. A re-formation of parties was taking place. Protection was dying hard, and the Conservatives were divided between the old Toryism and the Peelites—the Conservative Free Traders. The Whig party was still more divided, and the name of Whig as well as Tory was discredited and the sections were known as Conservatives and Radicals. In 1843 and 1847 Lord James Stuart had been returned unopposed, but in 1852 he declined to come forward again. The Burghs were somewhat

singularly situated. Lord James Stuart, a moderate Whig, had kept the seat for a long time, so that now new candidates with new principles turned everything topsy-turvy. The excitement in County and Burgh was very great. Mr Crawford and Mr Boyle were in the field, but Lord James Stuart, after some solicitation, having indicated a willingness to come back, a plebescite was taken of all the electors whether Mr Crawford should retire or not. The question was never a matter of doubt. The Conservatives, who thought they could beat Mr Crawford, knew they had no chance against Lord James Stuart. They therefore adopted a policy, sound as far as politics went, though of questionable honesty, and voted for the worst candidate, so that the old and faithful representative was thrown for an untried man—a not uncommon occurrence in political life, where gratitude is very little regarded. I have not to go far for several illustrations of this in municipal life as well.

Not to dwell too long on political matters, I must leave out much that would interest only a few, and might only raise questions which may as well rest. I cannot resist, however, giving an illustration of what may be called the "humours" of the election times. There are still many living who will remember the prominent personages here referred to. In the changed times which now exist satires such as will be reproduced would be almost impossible, and I am afraid the law of libel would come in to make these publications more than dangerous. I need not add that some of the allusions in one of these satires which we will give in our next chapter seem now not very pertinent, but were quite understood at the time to be very much the other way, and I daresay survivors will now be able to smile at what was at the time somewhat annoying.

CHAPTER XVII.

STILL POLITICAL.

Stirring though elections may now be, yet the present times bear no resemblance to those of fifty years ago. Candidates then were proposed in the open aid, on hustings erected in front of the County Buildings, before a howling mob. Each candidate had a proposer and seconder, who delivered speeches. The candidates followed; but it was on very rare occasions that more than a tenth part of the speeches were heard ten feet from the spot on which they were delivered. Practically they were delivred to the reporters, who probably had them in type before the nominations, for frequently a full report of the proceedings was being circulated in thousands among the howling crowds as they were leaving the Square. I have seen several candidates, evidently speaking at the pitch of their voices, making no more than a dumb show. I would be standing probably not twenty yards from them, and seldom could hear a single word which was spoken. Only on one occasion do I remember of an attempt being made to howl down Colonel Alexander, and the attempt proved a complete failure. The Colonel had only got his first few sentences out when it became evident that there was a determination that he was not to be allowed a hearing. He only paused a second or two, drew his breath, shut his eyes, and forthwith raised his stentorian voice and poured forth one of his most pronounced speeches in tones which were heard above the din, even to the farthest end of the square. It was a speech alluding to the proposed extension of the suffrage, the Colonel referred to the residuum as the "irresponsible and unimproving." This was met by a yell from those to whom it referred, but his voice was heard above the yell, and he finished his speech, heard by all in spite of all attempts to silence him. I think he was the only speaker ever I heard possessed of a power of making himself heard in such a row. On another occasion Mr Crawford, who had fallen into disrepute with the "residuum," with whom he was formerly a favourite, met with a similar reception; but he was quite unable to make himself heard at all. The Annbank Brass Band had been brought down to the front of the hustings, and whenever he commenced to speak they commenced to play; and the crowd simply roared and

laughed. That hustings' display ended in a great case of merriment, though when the candidates and their supporters attempted to form the usual procession from the hustings to their committee rooms, the crowd was so hostile that Mr Crawford had to make his escape from some of his quondam friends who were armed with cudgels, and took refuge in a solicitor's office in Wellington Square. It added to the amusement to know that his sanctuary was the office of a well-known Tory opponent. Sir James Fergusson, Colonel Alexander, and Mr Somervell of Sorn, their Chairman of Committeé, were often subjected to bad usage. In Mauchline and Cumnock, where they were best known and (except at election times) deservedly well liked, they were frequently hustled. The cruelty of the mob was carried out with great cunning. Innocent looking though dirty blackguards would go about with their hands in their pockets, apparently taking no interest in any demonstration, while they had brogues or other sharp instruments about their boots or elsewhere on their person and, coming in contact with any one whom they desired to injure, could without suspicion inflict considerable injury. This was carried to such an extent at one election that a Circuit Court had to take cognisance of it and several of the offenders underwent severe punishments. It was not all pleasure at election times, but, as Freemasons are said after any public function, go "from labour to refreshment," so after the toils and worries of an election public dinners were generally held as a consolation for defeat or ill-usage. I remember one of these dinners, held in the Corn Exchange in Kilmarnock. Mr Baird of Cambusdoon was one of the croupiers, and in a toast he had to propose he made a fair start. His opening remarks were in his broadest Doric. He said—"Mr Chairman and gentlemen, Dr Johnston, the great lexicographer, said the devil was the first Whig." It was with great difficulty he got any further. The allusion could not be mistaken; the devil and the Mauchline and Cumnock rowdies had so much in common at that particular time. The fact that they were all Whigs was at once accepted by the audience. It was in these times that the following satire appeared. Some may think it rough a little; in point of fact it is polished compared with many, but the ability and hits contained in it also place it above a great number issued on both sides, which need not be reproduced. It may, therefore, be taken as a good example of an election squib, and even those who don't remember all the characters, in reading between the lines, will guess at much of the fun.

Specially reported for the "Western Argus."

NOTES OF THE TRIAL OF CLAUDE ALEXANDER OF BALLOCHMYLE FOR THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION SLAUGHTER, HOMICIDE, OR MURDER OF A. H. O.

The excitement in the Auld Toon was only increased when it became known that Auchincruive still lived, and that by consent the matter in dispute has been referred to Sheriff Robison and a jury.

On the role of jurors being called, it was found that of the 45 cited, twenty were dead, nine above 60 years of age, and therefore exempt, and two certified to be unable to attend. The remaining fourteen were men of remarkably intelligent appearance, so much so, that the Prosecutor's Counsel, Mr Macrorie, suggested that his Right Hon. and noble friend, Sir Duncan Bruce (a well known Town Porter) should forthwith be cited as a special juror, and to act as foreman. This was not opposed, and Sir Duncan being called accepted office on condition, that so long as the trial lasted he should be supplied daily with one gallon sweet yule, one half-pint ditto Bass, three bottles Glenlivet, one of Campbeltown, three Lurgan, latrine, and spittoon.

The Sheriff reciprocated the sentiments Sir Duncan had so dramatically expressed, and consented to harmonise.

His Lordship, after passing a eulogium on the perfect state of the Jury Roll, ordered the Diet to be called against Claude Alexander.

For the prosecution there appeared Mr Macrorie, assisted by Mr M'Callum, who acted on the pay of the Cumnock committee. Mr W. P., jun., conducted the defence.

Around the rail of the dock we observed the Governor of Tasmania, the Rt. Hon. B. D., and in the gallery Earl D——, Lord St.——, Earl of Mayo, and a host of other disreputable characters from the back lanes and alleys of London.

The Prisoner's Appearance (described by the "Advertiser.")

On making his appearance the prisoner was greeted with yells of execration and bursts of ironical cheers, at which he was considerably moved. He is a tall thin personage, of true murderer type, with low contracted wrinkled brow, deep-set, fox-like eyes ever and anon glancing with demonical fire, pursing lip, large flabby cheeks covered in parts by strips of hair meant for whiskers, which pass in a parabolic line from ear to mouth corner. His general contour

is that of a bloated aristocrat. He was dressed in green corduroys with black and white stripes, velvet monkey jacket trimmed with moleskin, plush vest, Lord Lovel hat and appendages, blue scarf, spotted with lilas and crimson, orange gaiters, purple pantaloons, vellum knickerbockers, and white galoshes. After pleading not guilty in a somewhat trembling voice, he amused himself in chewing tobacco and writing notes to his friends aloft, to whom he frequently winked and grinned.

The indictment consisted of two counts. First, that prisoner was first in the field when the Liberal party divided, and so caused A.H.O. to take to his bed, to the serious injury of his person; and second, that at last prisoner did fairly beat A.H.O., and having beaten him drove him mad, to his mortal injury and the great scandal of the Liberal party.

A special defence was set up that prosecutor had previously been mad; second, that if he was mad now it was in consequence of the neglect of his own party and failure to use proper means for his recovery.

First Day's Trial.

The jury being empannelled, the prosecutor's Counsel (Macrorie) said he hoped to be allowed to unfold to their acute, penetrating, and intelligent minds one of the most frightful tragedies ever recorded in the pages of the "Argus." Without further comment he would proceed to the evidence. The foreman suggested they should not be in such a hurry. Was their first day's allowance of liquor not to hand yet? He thought the learned counsel might then address them, otherwise they'd be done far too soon. The foreman being suppressed,

Mr Macrorie waived his right—and then waved his hand and called on witness number one.

Rigby Wason, of Corwar, knew both accused and accuser. Considered both fools—confounded idiots. Thought himself a very ill-used man, and that he should have been sent to Parliament long ago; but the Whigs, poor fools, don't seem to see their own interests. Knew nothing of the murder, and appeared in Court to show that he knew nothing.

Cross (shown paper ending)—

"Make this mass of corruption weigh short of a ton,
And smell like a dunghill exposed to the sun," &c., &c.

To whom do you suppose these words apply?
Except to the Tory party, I cannot tell.
Did you ever apply them yourself?—Can't say.
Did you try to find out the author?—No (great sensation—a small boy named Tom Gemmell was carried out in a state of tears. His friends alleged that he had been busy writing on the Game Laws; but the Doctor informed me the Knockdhu Grouse were diseased—rather—this season.)
Cross, continued—Knew Sir Fitzroy Kelly always counted him a duffer—in fact, hated him, and had made it his life-long object to annoy him. Why so? Because I'm a better man and ought to have succeeded as well. (Great applause.)
At this point the proceedings were interrupted by deep groans from the witness room. On the door being opened by the Macer there was distinctly floated into Court the following song (we were told by a musical man near us) on B flat:—

An Organ Grinder.

Kind friends, attention give to me,
And hear my doleful ditty,
I am an object you'll agree
Deserving of great pity.

South Ayrshire men have been unkind,
The Whigs have been unkinder;
For bottled is my peace of mind
Through that Tory Alexander.

I've lost my seat—alack a-day!
And can't tell where to find her;
I'm done, I'm done, I'm put away,
For they've chosen Alexander.

Counsel for complainer said he held there could be no better proof of the injury his client had received than the singing of that mournful plaintive ditty. His Lordship took a note of this, and the Foreman (who had already got through his first day's allowance of beer) was visibly affected.
Examination resumed—
By the Bench Was quite sure he could say nothing of the murder. Would not say but his hanging neutral so long affected A. H. O.'s health. Hoped so. Repeated both candidates were fools. Knew other fools—bigger ones

too. His Lordship, e.g., after his interlocutor in Rankine's case.

H. C. G. wished to be examined to-day, as he had been with Bright's disease. Despised Bright. Often afflicted for three weeks preparing an extempore prayer to be delivered to-morrow, and he required peace of mind to-night to learn it. Explained it was necessary to be pious at election times. It wrought miracles. Was never troubled with Rumblequmptioniflux. Was indignant at insinuations as to this being a pretext for taking a nip half-hourly.

The Court—Did you say indignant? I thought you were a temperate man?

Witness—That's beyond the crown of my hat—I mean the record.

Cross—Would approve of a measure of education which would bring the masses half-way up to his own level. Would not like more, lest his occupation should be like Othello's. Declined to give them a song just now, but promised to sing on Chairing-day.

The Sheriff here interposed, said he had a tun of port which must be bottled to-night. He therefore continued the case till the morrow.

End of First Day's Trial.

Great excitement prevails, and fears that the public will rush to drink and become an incapable.

Second Day.

The Court was filled with more than it could hold. As the day's supply of liquor was not forthcoming, the foreman said they might cut short the evidence, the jury were determined.

The prosecuting counsel called as witness A. H. O. About the time he expected him to appear he turned to the audience, and clapping his hands he cried, "He is coming! He is coming!" The applause was terrific.

Examined—Had nothing to say. Was alive; was never so lively. Could do nothing but sing. The Judge having allowed this as evidence, the witness struck up a new version of "Why left I my hame," which will appear in the "Argus" next week.

Mr Rae, tailor, was rather a sharp fellow, a cutter indeed. Once voted for the Tories. Cut them lest Oswald should cut us as customer. Esteemed himself an orator —the best in Ayrshire. Lang was second, and perhaps Oswald third. Was fond of abusing people, and so left the Tories because they seemed not to like him for it.

Found the Whigs easier to work with on that account. Had heard O. was much affected by his defeat, and attributed to the invidious courses pursued by his opponents. By invidious he meant murderous. Believed all he heard —especially in his own favour, but was always a humble man.

Cross-examined—Had heard it said that he was a goose. Did not believe it. Kept one. Did not draw inspiration from it, but from widows.

(Rae here desired to recite "The Ranting Widow," but, the jury growing impatient, their foreman intimated that they would rather that Mr R. enjoyed a week's grouse shooting on his estate.)

A. Smith, Mauchline, detested influence used by Tory landlords. The influence of manufacturers and merchants was quite different. Calculated he was the best canvasser in Ayrshire, and as his man had not succeeded was sure he had been poisoned, bribed, or otherwise acted on. Could not say why he was sure. Hated whys. Hated all men who reason—never reasoned himself, and did not see that any other body had a right to do so.

Cross—Mr Smith, you are a box manufacturer to his Majesty (pointing downwards)? I believe so. How many boxes have you made for him? That's one for you. Do you approve of the short time movement? Yes, on farms where the clocks are so far forward that some of them can afford an hour or two. What's your opinion of the present state of Hypothec? I never heard he was unwell. What have you to say to the Game Laws? I think all gambling should be abolished. Do you approve of disestablishing the Irish Church? Sir, I would disestablish everybody—and would have an equal division of everything but my box-work. And for these reasons you support Mr O? Certainly. Quite so, Mr Smith. That will do.

Mr Smith asked leave to give a breakdown, but after several attempts at beginning he was removed.

This closed case for prosecution.

For the Defence.

The only witness called was Miss Jean Bide. With the help of a steam crane Jean was hoisted into the box by sixty labourers; but in the lowering, her umbrella stuck in the rail, and was not released till two of the bars were fired away by the Ayr Artillery. Things having subsided, Jean emitted a sigh resembling AH! O! Mr Macrorie desired the words be taken down as evidence—and Miss Bide was requested to behave more decorously.

Interrogated—Remembered, O long ago, when he was blue, and not so swall'd. Had advised him to hook-it before this election, but he wouldn't.

The Court—Who is Hook-it, Jane? Dinna talk Gaelic.

Witness—I'm speaking Scotch, my lord.

Asked the difference between the two candidates, replied—Bating her fees for washing o's linen there was not much. O. said she heerd there was the difference of an AH! which was peculiarly applicable in his present state. Bulloch said there was the difference of a sea (c). Knew difference between A. and O. A. was the first letter, without it there could be no O. Therefore thought A. the most hintellectual. A. stood for Alexander.

Cross—"Allow me, my good woman—What difference can a c or sea make?"

"That's a' ye ken, my man, especially when there's a Claud an han'. But if it's the alphabet you're after, my agent, Mr Kelly, will answer for me."

Mr Mac—That will do.

Witness—When will I ca' for my washin' fees?

Mr Mac—Go to Auchincruive.

Witness—Go to h—l. Is that a' the thanks I get for curing his leeriness and diarama.

Re-examined—It was well known she knew all about the election before it came on. A wee bird whistled it. Rather objected to say more, but being pressed Miss Boyd elevated herself to her full and sang—

Jean's Sang.

Air—"The Lass of Ballochmyle."

I'm Jean—and Jean is no sae green,
When on her lips so many hang;
To number five she counts ilk bean,
And tells the way elections gang.
Up lums the wee bit birdies sing,
While I sit listening a' the while,
And soon our touns and clachans ring
Wi' "Bless our M.P. Ball Myle."

Wi' careful step I lately strayed
To find South Ayrshire's promised joy,
And musing in a bonnie glade
Her heart's delight I chanced to spy.
His look was like the morning sun,
His air like Nature's vernal smile,
Perfection whispered, passing by,
Behold the lad of Ballochmyle.

Then Jean, says I, it's him we'll ha'e,
Though O——'s gold so tempting shine,
And Claud will to St Stephen's gae
While O—— tends his dinners fine;
Then let electors a' agree,
And greet this blink o' Fortune's smile,
Here's to the lad—come, three times three,
And one more cheer for Ballochmyle.

Ay! here's to Claud! Until I dee
I'll shout for Claud o' B——.

The old lady was so overcome that she had to be carried out.

Mr Macrorie was so disgusted with the old woman's "ejaculations" that he could not proceed with his address. He therefore moved his Lordship to adjourn.

Agreed to.

THIRD DAY.

His Lordship thought the counsel need not speak. The jury had made up their minds—so there was an end of it.

Both parties acquiesced.

The jury, having been absent for about five minutes, returned, and the foreman read their verdict:—We—(hic)—th-a-t is to (hic) s-a-a-y, my fel-low p-p-p-orters—jur-ors I m-m-ean—and I-I-I e-e-n-n-o-r-r-mously f-f-f-ind the (hic) (hic) p-p-p-rison—(hic)—er guilty as l-l-abelled."

SENTENCE.

His Lordship then assumed the blue hat, and said he had no alternative in the awful circumstances of the case but to send the prisoner for five years to the plenipotentiary of St. Stephen's. (Great applause.)

The prisoner wept. Going down the dock he cried to B.D.—"Cheer up, Ben, you'll need me ere long, I suppose!"

End of Trial.

What may be looked upon as the amenities or otherwise of an election time, as far as politics were concerned, was not confined to the election time itself. There was the annual "giving an account of their stewardship" which M.P.'s had to undergo. It was then the heckler came to the front, and meetings again became lively. The chief of these hecklers was Mr Bone, a saddler, a poet, a man with many brilliant parts, a strong politician, and a fearless

champion heckler. I will refer to him in another chapter as editor and author of what would now be called scurrilous literature, but he was much in evidence as a "heckler" when both Parliamentary and municipal elections were on. As to political leaning he may be said to have favoured the Liberal side, but it was all the same to him when he considered that a job of any kind had been brought home, and he never relaxed his hold till he had drawn out some information. He was equally severe on Mr Craufurd and Mr Boyle; so prominent fifty years ago. Both candidates frequently came under the fire of the renowned heckler, and it is said that Bone won the election by a single "heckle." The Conservative candidate was an advocate, and son of one of the brilliant Lords of the College of Justices for Scotland, and had dealt very heavily with those concerned in the Radical rising at the dawn of last century. In his speech to the "free and independent electors of Ayr, Irvine, Campbeltown, Inveraray, and Oban," Mr Boyle was making a distinction to illustrate a point. "I draw the line," he said. "One moment," cried the heckler. "Might I be allowed to put one question? Is the line the candidate for the Ayr District o' Burghs speaks o' the one his faither hung the Radicals wi'?" There was a great uproar, and the candidate could not resume his speech for some time. In fact, this inconsequent introduction of the old feud set the meeting ablaze, and but for that I believe the nine of a minority might have been nine of a majority. Mr Bone was equally severe when Mr E. J. Craufurd was Member of Parliament and giving accounts of his stewardship. This occurred as each year came round, and created a great deal of interest and amusement to the electors and non-electors. Mr Craufurd proved a hard-working member, and while he pleased the majority of his Liberal constituents, there were others (a large minority) who were yearning for a change, and looked upon the hon. gentleman as a bore. Mr Craufurd had been appointed Junior Council of the Mint in the Administration of Lord Palmerston, and when addressing his constituents in the usual way during the recess, among the questions asked him by Mr Bone was one to the effect that he might kindly define his duties as such. "Well," said Mr Craufurd, they are more of an honorary nature, but I am supposed to see that no bad money is allowed to be circulated in the country." "Oh!" said Mr Bone, "the Sheriff does that already, and is well paid for't." The renowned heckler, on another occasion, carried a vote of "no confidence" in Mr Craufurd. The hon. member had absented himself from a

critical division on a certain date, and in the heckling process Mr Bone asked the following question—"Would Mr Craufurd kindly tell us where he was on the 14th of ——. (A voice—"At the Great Northern Meeting," and laughter.) I may explain, to convey the fun in the interjection, that the Newton Races, the Whipmen's Society meeting generally took place about that date, and Mr Bone, who was their clerk, was editor of a publication well known at the time and designated "The Newton Race Bill."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bone, the Saddler, Poet, and Heckler.

If there is one thing more than another that should convince a man of his own insignificance it is the fact of living in a critical community of which he is but an atom. That atom, however, can be made important by surroundings and circumstances, and just as the alchemist, through that new element radium, is said to transmute baser metals into gold, and can evolve the diamond from charcoal, so also can the human mind expand and become a true reflection of the manners and customs of the age in which it lived. Half-a-century ago, and for that part of it, well on for twenty years afterwards, Ayr had quite a number of men in its midst who could be truly designated "worthies." Some of these I have already mentioned, but have as yet merely touched the hem of their garments. Poets, kindling at the flame of the great master who first saw the light at Alloway in 1759, philosophers and erudite preachers, men of inventive genius, statesmen, and gallant soldiers, not a few. My purpose, however, as I have already explained in these pages, is more to recall the sayings and doings of the rank and file and burgh merchants who met each other in everyday life in Ayr from 40 to 60 years ago, and hand them down to posterity. One of the outstanding men of that time was undoubtedly Robert Bone, saddler, poet, journalist, and "champion heckler," referred to in last chapter. Han Schaws, the old German poet and shoemaker, with his dove-like eyes, immortalised by Longfellow, put me in mind of Bone, who was ever ready with his joke and smart repartee.

There are only a very limited number of men and women now living in Ayr, and the ranks are gradually becoming thinner and thinner, who can remember that we had a comic paper published in the town 50 years ago, and its name was—well, what do you suppose?—"The Mustard Blister." Imprints in those early days were necessary for the guerilla warfare of social event-chronicling, but, with the exception of the great case of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," the law of libel was, so to speak, a dead letter. In fact, now when I remember, I don't think any indication of the editorship appeared. It was, however, quite well known among a certain class, both in Newton and the "auld toun," that Bone, the saddler, was

editor and proprietor, and James Connel, better known as "Wee" Connell or "Treacle," the printer. Gossip and not a little scandal frequently appeared in its columns, and woe betide the man or woman who did a mean thing, or one who aped being above his fellows. They all caught it. The print, in fact, showed up all the failings and ignored the virtues of the Ayr worthies of the day, and the quaint sobriquets applied to many of them were carried to the grave, and are still referred to by the present generation. It is pleasing, however, to know that at this time of day such epithets were taken in good part, and now and again I frequently hear a descendant speaking about his father or grandfather as old so-an-so of "Mustard Blister" or "Newton Race Bill" notoriety.

Who does not remember the Newton Races of old? "The Kipper Fair" the festival was also known by, when it was looked upon as something akin to high treason for the "pubs" and inns in Newton to dish up mackerel instead of salmon. Salmon was, of course, cheap in those days, and dispensed liberally at the Fair and Races. The Newton Arms Inn, Skipper Cothbert's, Jenny Lawson's, Andrew Hair's, and Mrs Andrew's, Cross House, were the regular houfs then, where ale, whisky, and porter were swilled after partaking of the kipper, generally served pretty salt. Before the races, the members of the Whipmen's Society, mounted on their heavy chargers, which did hard work drawing carts week in week out, decked out with ribbons on manes and tails, and the riders in their Sunday braws, including blue bonnets with strawberry tops, paraded the streets, and then proceeded to the sands of the Newton shore. The races were rather primitive in their way, but generally enlivened by the antics of "Blood" and "Daft Willie" attempting to climb the greasy pole for a leg of mutton. The carpenters in Ayr at that time were a lively lot, and while they made "Jemmy Rumpy" roar at the festivities during the launching of a ship, always attended the races in force, and one of them, armed with a long stick with a piece of boarding at the top, assisted poor "Blood" up the greasy pole till the leg of mutton was within measurable distance of his grasp, but always dropped him down again. "Duke Dalap" and the "Badger," also assisted in the fun. After the races the cavalcade, headed by the "Captain," "Lord" James Henry, made another round of the pubs, and dispersed. The festival used to finish up with a ball either at the Skipper's or the Newton Arms, where the wives and lasses of the ancient place and their gallant cadger lads held high jinks. The membership

of the society at one time had no fewer than three Alexander M'Call's on the roll, and the way the natives distinguished them was by the appearance of their hair, viz.:—White Sandy, Black Sandy, and Red Sandy. There were also three Halls and four Watsons on the books of the ancient society at the same time. Bone, the saddler, the heckler par excellence, being secretary to the society, is my excuse for bringing these notes in here. He was by no means an idle man, he discharged many duties, but his great forte was his heckling. Never an election passed but Bone was to the front. His ready wit was at times remarkable, and many of his retorts when chaffed by his familiar friends were amusing and stinging with satire. His controversies with the late Colonel Shaw and Mr Henry C. Gray, which many may remember reading, are worthy of reproduction.

Colonel Shaw, a retired officer of the Indian Army (a kind-hearted and respected townsman of Ayr for many a day), but most eccentric in his way of treating both social and political questions, created considerable indignation by a letter he sent to the press commenting on the festivals held all over the world on the occasion of the ter-centenary of Shakespeare's birth. The "auld toun" had done its humble tribute, and the colonel was wroth. "What had Shakespeare done for humanity, christianity, and improving the condition of the poor and lowly?" he asked with scorn, and went on to assert that "wee" Jimmy Begg, of the Newton, had done more for humanity by inventing a rat-trap which destroyed three rodents at one snap, and without unnecessary pain. I well remember the reply which appeared in the columns of this paper, and showed Bone in a highly finished poetic vein, pregnant with satiric fire. The Colonel's letter was signed "Anti-Humbug," and here is the reply:—

"Who's this profanes the bard of Avon's name?
Mean dastard, sycophant, the fame
Of thy poor horn, blown however clear,
Can ne'er detract one gem from our Shakespeare.
Within thy caput nature herself has placed
Uncultivated brains—a barren waste—
Reclaim the soil that 'Anti-Humbug' drains,
Pulverise the mass of chaos into fertile plains,
Then shall his eye be single and may see
What Shakespeare was, and is, and still shall be;
High on the throne of everlasting mind
He sits A bard, THE bard of all mankind."

A satirical poem, called the "First Report of a General Meeting of the Ayr Tippling Club," is credited to Bone's pen. It appeared in 1849, and introduced at least a score of the "worthies." The meeting was called to pronounce the doom of the editor of the "Mustard Blister" for severe criticisms on their conduct and character, strictures which nearly drove the Tipplers frae the earth. The piece begins with the following verse:—

"Oh! fellow townsmen pray do not refuse,
A parting gift from unambitious muse,
Although thae unco rigid troublous times
Mak's folk beware o' what invokes their rhymes."

Each worthy is immortalised by a cognomen that can easily be recognised, such as "The Dodger," "China Jock," "Ham," "The Phantom," "Little Johnny," "Prince Charlie," &c. Then

"The chairman took his seat, an' did declare,
But for the honoured Tippling Club o' Ayr,
Distilleries may their operations stop—
The "Star" and "Eagle" baith may shut up shop;
This consolation he wud bid them seek,
An' begged some Member tae arise and speak.
My certy, there's the red-faced "Auctioneer,"
Wi' "Tallow Chaffs," convuls'd wi' conscious fear,
While "China Jock" comes trudging up the stair,
Tak's aff his hat, and shakes han's wi' auld "Hair,"
Sits doon beside his cronies an' big "Ham"—
Cries 'Waiter, waiter,' here, bring in a dram!"

The discussion then goes on fast and furious, and one wonders, with a population of some 9000 souls, that there was so much scandal in Ayr.

Mr Hugh Girvan, a worthy auctioneer and web agent of the town fifty years ago, felt very much aggrieved at some scathing criticism with reference to "keeping off" so much cash from the women whose cotton webs, he alleged, were not "buttoned" according to contract, that appeared in the "Blister," and threatened the editor with horse-whiping. Not to be done, the letter was inserted in the next issue and the auctioneer called upon to produce his second and there would be a whipping duel, with Mrs W——, one of the cheated women, as umpire. The affair was treated as a good joke, and Hugh with ridicule. The Ayr folks had a meeting about fifty years ago in the Town Hall, convened by the Provost, to consider the question

of the abolition of tolls. The tradesmen and artisans of the town considered it an injustice to be saddled with an additional burden, and were, of course, up in arms at the proposition about to be made in name of the ratepayers, and attended in great force. The parties who spoke and proposed the resolutions in favour of the abolition were several members of the Town Council. The various resolutions looked like being carried nem. con. when the Provost remarked that in order to strengthen the hands of the Government the meeting might be unanimous, and asked if there was any amendment. "Yes," said Mr Bone, "I beg to propose one—In effect that this meeting strongly oppose the imposition of additional taxation on the ratepayers, and that the parties who use the roads for vehicular traffic should pay for them." Mr Bone made several sallies at the professional men, including doctors with their carriages using the roads and wanting the public to pay the piper. The amendment was duly seconded, and carried by a large majority.

Mr David Sharp, painter, was a friend of Mr Bone, and in proceeding to their respective places of business, frosty morning they met as usual, and the following laconic dialogue occurred:—

Mr Bone—"Sharp morning, Mr Sharp."

Mr Sharp—"Yes; it's going to the bone, Mr Bone."

Mr Bone—"Sharp retort."

Commenting on a letter sent to the editor of the "M. B." about a glaring abuse of police authority, the following laconic sentence was given by Mr Bone:—"This requires no comment; it is justice murdered." He now and again contributed to the "Reformer's Gazette," Glasgow, edited by Peter Mackenzie, and set several of the Ayr Bailies by the ears for neglecting things in the Auld Toun.

I am not aware that Bone's mantle has fallen on what may be called a worthy successor. Heckling at political or municipal meetings is generally conducted by questions being handed to the Chairman in writing and answered straight off. There is no chance of a regular discussion taking place. The affirmative or negative is generally given, and the audience is pleased or displeased just as it happens. At municipal November meetings seldom anything of importance is brought up. The most serious questions are generally about some badly lighted district in which one or two extra lamps are wanted, or there are some places where footpaths are bad or the streets not decently macadamised; while such an unimportant matter as where the Shows are

to be placed, exercises the minds of electors to the exclusion of everything else. This raises the old debating society question of "Whether it is the times that make the man or the man who makes the times?" Put it in another form—Was it the times or circumstances which created Cromwell and Napoleon, or was it Cromwell and Napoleon who made such changes in the history of Britain and France? Much can be said on either side, and the same may be said of the heckling at Parliamentary and municipal meetings of the middle of last century. Was it the importance of events which created Bone the heckler, or was it Bone who gave the importance to these events? I do not think we have lost much by the disappearance of the "Mustard Blister" or the "Newton Race Bills." It required ability somewhat equal to that of Bone or Robert Howie Smith (who sometimes contributed) to give them even the characteristic of being clever though ill-natured. Latterly they had degenerated and become silly, though they remained ill-natured enough; and it soon became known that the parties engaged in producing these slanderous effusions were much more deserving of being held up to public ridicule than those they were slandering.

CHAPTER XIX.

Municipal Authorities.

In dealing with political matters and politicians, I may in some instances give offence, for in spite of the strongest determination to be neutral and unbiassed, private feelings will obtrude, and in relating what I recollect of the politicians of 50 or 60 years ago, I am afraid I cannot resist giving a tinge to the narrative which, even to an unobservant reader, clearly enough indicates my leanings. All profess to be impartial; every one thinks what he says or does is right, and so far impartial. It would be well if all would disabuse their minds of the idea that they are unbiassed. Why, sometimes the very attempt to avoid even the appearance of being biassed forces one to make too big a sacrifice, and be over favourable to the other side. Better, therefore, to proclaim your opinion, give your own version of affairs, and, of course, leave your readers to judge for themselves, giving them the credit of being able to form their own opinion and make due allowance for your proclivities.

The best you can do is to tell your story and substantiate it—claim the right to give your own views and leave others the same right to form theirs—and thus you can say you have consciously done no more than you had a full right to do. I hope, however, my bias will never carry me so far that I will claim all goodness as belonging to the members of the party to which I belong, and allot all evil to those with whom I differ. So far from that, I freely state that personally I am satisfied that there are very many differing from me widely for whom I have much more respect than I have for many who subscribe to all my views; and even when we do most widely differ, I see no reason why we should not pleasantly agree to do so. With this dissertation on my politics, which, I admit, are quite pronounced, I gladly leave them and turn now to municipal matters, in which there should be no politics. I hope I will always have grace given me to at least treat them so, though I am afraid there are many who look upon the Town Council, their churches, and even their charities solely as machinery with which they can politically influence their friends and neighbours. There are ministers and laymen who are politicians first, and anything you like afterwards. I have heard a political sermon in the pulpit, but it did

not deserve the name of a sermon, and the preacher did not deserve to be the occupant of any pulpit. I know Town Councillors also who are political to the backbone; as a rule, they have not much backbone, and are unworthy of being Councillors. Their constituents should look after them and get rid of them, for they cannot conscientiously look after the interests of their constituents. As far as my reminiscences go, there has been a little of political intriguing at all times in municipal affairs. If anything, however, I think the evil of this is being seen now, and it is considerably abated. So far there is an improvement. There are others, however, who contend that our municipal rulers have terribly fallen off in many other respects within the past half century. Now, much as I revere the good old times I am not prepared to go that length. The electors always had the power in their own hands of returning their representatives. Sometimes they turned out very good men and put very indifferent ones in their place, and sometimes the best men will not allow themselves to be put in nomination. This has been the case, however, since I first took an interest in municipal affairs, but I cannot say we are worse now than we were fifty years ago. At all times we have had a few busybodies, desirous of pushing themselves forward, to grasp municipal power, and obtain positions they are unfit for. Let us be thankful, however, that at the same time there are many deeply interested in the prosperity of the town in which they live, and well qualified to discharge any duties falling to them to counterbalance the weaklings whom the electors sometimes unfortunately send in. It is alleged that within the past fifty or sixty years the honourable office of a town councillor has sadly deteriorated. We even find some of our oldest inhabitants saying, "Men were men in those days," and provosts, magistrates, and councillors should be. The main object I have in giving these reminiscences is not only to give a fair record of what Ayr was fifty or sixty years ago, but to draw somewhat of a comparison between then and now, "to point a moral and adorn a tale" if possible, and at the same time do justice both to the past and to the present of the "Auld Toun." As I have already said, in some respects we have improved, in others I am sorry to say we have not; but in fairness I decline to be led away by veneration for the past, or a desire to criticise too severely or unduly praise the present. I will not join in any popular chorus of approval or disapproval of either. The provosts, magistrates, and councillors of fifty or sixty years ago were only mortal—very mortal—as they are at present. In point

of social position, business ability, devotion to the duties of the office, and general standing in the community, I do not know if they were much in advance or further behind than they are at the present day. To hear some folk speaking, one would think that there has been a steady falling off in the standing of our civic dignitaries for the fifty years. Every November has brought with it the introduction of some weaklings and the retirement of some stalwarts. Had this been the case, I can only say that by this constant declension our authorities must now be at a very low ebb indeed. As far as I can recollect, the same was said fifty years ago, with as little reason. Provost Miller was senior magistrate then, and had kept the chair for about twenty years. His portrait was painted and hung in the Council Chambers for no other reason than that he had occupied the position for that length of time. There were many much better and worse Provosts before him, and, to put it mildly, there have been several since, somewhat similar, but ill deserving the opinion expressed that socially, intellectually, or otherwise, they do not compare quite favourably with him. Provost Miller was, as Provosts go, just a fair specimen of what Provosts are. He fought his way up from being a common Councillor into a Bailieship or some other step in advance, and ultimately became Provost. He was a decent High Street merchant, and at the present day we have dozens of merchants in the High Street who would make as respected Provosts as he was. He held office for a long time, more on account of the way he pulled the municipal strings than from any great merit he had or any great good he ever did to the town. Not only has he had his portrait hung in the Council Chambers, but he has had one of the finest roads in Ayr named after him. A road by any other name would be as good. Unfortunately the naming of a road or the painting of a portrait does not necessitate the setting forth of the claims why such an honour should be conferred. Many such honours have been bestowed, but always with good reason which could be set forth, and as a rule they have always been such as fully to justify the honour being conferred. In this case I am not aware that the records of the Burgh of Ayr furnish a clue as to why this honour was conferred. Provost Miller was just a decent Provost, with all the faults and failings belonging to humanity, and except that he prevented others, possibly as good, or perhaps better or worse, from enjoying the honoured title, there was nothing specially noteworthy about him.

I cannot resist bringing in a story here as illustrating the value of this honoured title of Provost. It would be a

pity if such a story should be lost, for, unlike many good stories, it is true. It relates to the late Provost Campbell, of Irvine, one of the most respected provosts any burgh could wish to have. The Provost was at one time a railway contractor, by which he acquired a considerable fortune. He was lucky in living at a time when big prices were going for railway contracts. There were few competitors, and the work being somewhat hazardous a good margin of profit was allowed, and many rose to affluence from very small beginnings. Provost Campbell, at least, did so, and having made his pile retired to Irvine, built himself a comfortable mansion, and having little now to do, and being somewhat generous found his way into Irvine Town Council, and was made Provost of the Burgh. He was very proud of the honour—more proud even of the honour than he was of the wealth, to which he was somewhat indebted for it. He entertained his brother Councillors almost royally. I don't know whether the present Provost of that Royal Burgh does so now or not, but Provost Campbell had nothing small about him except his vanity, and some Provosts have that too, and other smallnesses as well, but the retired railway contractor was very anxious to show forth his glory to a brother contractor, who had not yet retired, so he invited him to spend a week-end in Irvine, and marked the event by entertaining the whole Council to dinner on one of the evenings of his visit, not to have that light hid under a bushel while presiding over such a distinguished body of Irvineites. He prepared his brother contractor for the occasion, commenting warmly on the importance of such a position as the Provostship of a Royal Burgh. (Ma conscience!) During dinner he kept harping away about this importance, all the more persistently because his guest did not seem to realise the full value of such a position. He, of course, flaunted the importance of his guest before the Councillors, for the importance of a railway contractor was considerable, more especially one who was at that time forming the railway from Dumfries through Galloway, which was a good-sized contract of several hundred thousand pounds. The councillors, as even men of local standing do, paid all due respect to wealth and the large employer of labour, but the large employer did not seem to pay the same importance to civic dignity, even though it was of such a marked degree as the Provost of a Royal Burgh, and those who sat in Council with him. The Provost, however, continued to impress its importance upon his guest by continually referring to it in almost every observation he made. At last the railway contractor got tired of the continued

reiteration, and not unwilling to take the Provost down a peg before his brother Councillors, he exclaimed in his ordinary doric, not improved by his intercourse with railway navvies:—

"Man, Campbell, ye mak' an infernal fuss over this blessed Provostship of yours. What about it?"

"What about it?" exclaimed the astounded Provost. "Look at the importance of the position."

"Importance of a fiddle stick," replied the big employer of labour. "I have more gaffers under me in that one job down at Castle-Douglas than you have councillors, and each as many men working under him as all your councillors put together. Fudge for your Royal Burgh!"

"But, my dear sir," remonstrated the Provost, "look at the HONOUR. A ROYAL Burgh, and to be the Provost of a ROYAL Burgh, why, it is next to Royalty itself!"

"Augh! Campbell, shut up about your Royal Provostship. Do you ken, man, on that contract down in Galloway I have seven Provosts carting to me!"

This fairly squashed poor Provost Campbell, for, unfortunately, it was true. In the district through which the new railway was being made a great number of small burghs existed, and Royal burghs, too, though small. There were Dalbeattie, New Galloway, Penpont, Castle-Douglas, Dalry, Kirkcudbright, and others. Before railways came into existence the principal men of these places were contractors carriers, carters, owners of a few horses and carts doing all the carrying business in the neighbourhood. While the railway was being made, the contractor gave them small sub-contracts for carting or removing soil and materials for them, so in this way he had engaged all the provosts of the district and had them "carting for him." I hope the lesson was not lost on worthy Provost Campbell, and probably Provosts nowadays will profit by it as well, for even the best of us are nothing the worse of a lesson in humility.

Returning to Provost Miller—the Provost of my younger days—he certainly attended well to the duties of his office. If he did nothing specially noteworthy for the benefit of the town, he kept the municipal gear in good working order. He kept in close touch with the member for the Burghs—Lord James Stuart—and had as his right hand man the local agent of the member, old Mr Robert Goudie, well known as one of the most astute Liberal agents and canvassers in the West, who pulled the strings most discreetly, and behind the screens did a good deal of the Provost's work. He had as Town Clerk Mr Hugh Reid, the pre-

decessor of Mr John Gray; and the treasurer of the burgh was Mr Joseph Erskine. There was no Chamberlain in those days. Church attendance was a regular institution, for there was a church parade every Sunday in addition to the more imposing annual parade in which the Town Council took part, and which was joined by the whole Convener's Board, comprising the Convener and all the Deacons with the officials of both bodies. There was not then the strong police force we have now. All we could muster was three halberdiers, with their three-cornered hats and scarlet coats. But these three were mustered regularly every Sunday, forenoon and afternoon, and marched to church, followed by the Provost, Town Clerk, and Treasurer. The accompanying sketch is a fair representation of the procession. Many of our older inhabitants can bear witness to the faithfulness of the representation, recognising both the halberdiers and those who ruled over us, who in due form devoutly went to church and heard themselves regularly prayed for. As I have already indicated, Provost Miller has left little behind him to testify to any great progress the town made during his Provostship. Miller Road was just formed a few years before he demitted office. Prior to this the whole distance between Dalblair Road and Victoria Park Road was not intersected by a single roadway. There were rows of houses along the Racecourse Road from Barns Street unbroken by any side road to the opening at Victoria Park, so that any communication between that road and Midton Road down to the Fauldbacks (as the railway station entrance was then known by) was nil. There was, of course, much trespassing, and footpaths were almost visible through the lands of Midsands, Bellevue, and Barns. Miller Road was first opened, and very soon after it was all built on. The enterprise of Mr Arthur Lang, already mentioned in these reminiscences, opened up the lands of Bellevue, and now the whole district is practically built on. As evidence of the few houses outside the Royal Burgh sixty or seventy years ago, Provost Miller when he retired from business built a house out Midton Road, known as Midton Cottage. There were few houses near it. The Knowe was the first house beyond it, built about that time by Mr Heron. Midton Road was scarcely formed then, certainly not made or kerbed and channelled as roads are now. It was more of a public footpath or avenue, similar to some of the back roads in Newton. The change now is perhaps one of the most remarkable features about Ayr, showing how in all directions the Auld Toon has extended beyond its former boundaries.

Halberdiers.—(1) J. Young, (2) T. M'Murtrie, (3) J. M'Derment.
Magistrates.—(1) Hugh Reid, Town Clerk: (2) Hugh Millar, Provost: (3) J. Erskine, Treasurer.

There is very little building ground now between the town and racecourse unoccupied, where fifty years ago there were fields of waving corn and grazing for the few dairies in the neighbourhood. During the long period in which the Provostship was held in the same hand, Ayr did not progress at all. Previous to Provost Miller's appointment there had been a spurt of progress. The Town Buildings and our handsome spire had been erected, and the old jail removed from Sandgate Street, even the Wallace Tower had been built a few years previous. The County Buildings and Wellington Square had been formed, but seemingly the county and the town having made an effort which had been a decided improvement, things had been left to simmer till some other effort was made in the way of progress, but the effort was not made during the Miller reign.

I do not think this should be altogether laid to the Provost's charge. There seems to be a sort of idea that whatever is done during the term of office of a Provost he should get the credit of it, and in the same way if there is a slackness or anything like stagnation he should get the blame. This is hardly fair. There is generally a power behind the throne of far more importance than its occupant. This has generally been the case, and on them to some extent depends whether there is to be a march of progress or not. An energetic Dean of Guild often has much in his power to carry out schemes and push both Provost and Council forward, but it was evident that in Provost Miller's time there was a period of rest, perhaps of thankfulness, and there was no one who was bent strongly on public improvements. It is not difficult to trace a continuity of power behind the throne during a succession of Provosts, to whom much is due, both in the way of progress or otherwise. Upwards of half-a-century ago it has to be admitted that Mr Robert Goudie, father of the late ex-Provost Goudie, had much to do in guiding the municipal machine. After him came Mr J. J. M'Derment—"The Maister," by which title he was generally known. The title was probably well deserved. To a great extent he did the whole work of the Council, combining the Provostship, Magistracy, and officialdom in his own person. It came to an end, and Dean of Guild Hunter took up a prominence which was certainly more beneficial, and aided and guided as it was by Mr John Pollock, for many years Town Clerk, much good work was done, such as the supply of water to the town, the new Town Hall, and the steady development of the harbour. I do not insinuate that there is a power behind the throne at present. The Council and officials get on fairly

well. No agent, Surveyor, or Dean is now openly discharging the duties of the whole. The Magistrates and the Council are imbued with the belief that they are masters of the situation, and that the officials are their salaried servants. The officials do not grudge them whatever honour is in it, at the same time they have no reason to find fault with a quiet feeling of where the power lies. Thinking on the part of one, and knowing privately on the part of others are quite different things. Very probably a one-man power would transact the Council business better than it is carried on just now, make fewer mistakes, do work better, and give us more for our money. We must put up with things as they are and wait for results, not judging too hastily. Fifty and sixty years ago, undoubtedly during Provost Miller's term of office, the great influence in the Council was held by Mr Robert Goudie. Politics, Municipal and Imperial, were his forte, and he devoted himself to them. The Provost's aims were mostly political, and the results of his rule were confined to that. It was party first and public interests next, and I cannot help thinking public interests suffered. For a time Mr John Paul was Dean of Guild, but evidently the Deanship then was a sinecure. There was little doing or evidently to be done, and Messrs Paul and Goudie often had trips together, involving their absence for a week or two, during which the town suffered not.

To conclude this chapter, which is somewhat dry, I may bring in other stories as a little enlivenment and in illustration of the persons and times in which they lived. Messrs Paul and Goudie were spending a holiday at Harrogate, and, as all good people of Ayr do, or should do, when they go from home, they attended church on Sunday. The hours of worship were not so well known as they should be, and it so happened that when our two Ayr friends entered the church the service had been some time commenced. As they made their way to a pew, somewhat disconcerted perhaps by many in the congregation turning to look at the two strangers, the clergyman, in reading the New Testament lesson from the Acts, raised his voice (probably to bring back the wandering attentions of his audience) as he came to the words in the verse regarding the evil spirit, "Paul, I know, but who are ye?" Both parson and congregation were electrified by the prompt answer to the question, which was taken as personal, loud enough to be heard over the whole church, "I'm Mr Robert Goudie, writer, Ayr."

Another time Messrs Paul and Goudie were in London and a friend with them, who was very zealous in sight-seeing, always contrived to get on the box seat of the 'buses

beside the driver to obtain all the information possible. I do not mention the friend's name, only remarking that, like his friends, he was fond of a good dinner. One afternoon, coming up the Strand on a 'bus, having to dine at the "Ship," a popular Ayr resort and one of the hotels near Trafalgar Square, our friend was seated as usual next the driver. Mr Goudie accosted the driver from the other side, telling him that his friend was only lately removed from an asylum, but was quite harmless, only on every occasion when he passed Nelson's Monument in Trafalgar Square he insisted on jumping off the 'bus. Tipping him with a shilling he asked him kindly to take his friend safely on to Victoria Station, where he would be all right. Messrs Paul and Goudie quietly got off the 'bus before it reached the Square, leaving their friend, who told the driver to let him off on arriving at the Monument.

"All right, governor!" replied the driver, but continued to drive on.

"But I must get off here."

"All right; all right, sir."

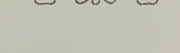
"But I must get off; it's important."

"All right; just you sit still."

The passenger became violent, but the driver remained firm, for remonstrance was in vain. The bus proceeded steadily on, the driver keeping a firm hold of his companion, whispering into his ear—

"Old boy, don't try any of your nonsense with me. You are going to Victoria Station, and to Victoria Station you shall go. None of your tricks, or (an oath here) I'll send you back to where you come from."

The bewildered citizen of Ayr was driven the whole journey, and arrived back at the "Ship" to join his friends at dinner when they were at the fourth or fifth course, and he commenced to tell them of the wonderful escape he had from a mad bus driver. I need not spoil the story by adding any more to it. These stories are at least fifty years old and are true. I claim them as copyright, but if retold and dated only a few years ago they will be chestnuts. But further municipal matter will require another chapter.



CHAPTER XX.

Municipal Worthies.

To the credit of the municipal rule it may be said that at all times we have had numerous "worthies" among our local authorities. It does not flatter them by saying we could not have got better; I grant at once that in many cases they have been far from perfection—there is no difficulty in admitting that. Yet many worthy citizens have taken upon themselves the burden of giving a great deal of attention to public business, not for any personal benefit to themselves or for any great thanks they got, and though they did not get the rewards to which they were entitled they were worthy all the same in the best sense of the word, and well deserved the respect and thanks of their fellow citizens. In the previous chapter I alluded to the fact that frequently politics were allowed to interfere with municipal rule, which was never done to the advantage of the town. When electors submit to be ruled by those whose only title or wish to do so is on account of their political proclivities, they suffer for it. The Councillor who places either his political or religious principles first necessarily places the welfare of his constituents second, and very secondary services are consequently given. Provost Miller's term of office was a long one, and would have been longer if his own wishes had been carried out. But in spite of political engineering, he had to bow to the inevitable; though even in his retirement he so contrived to pull the strings that no political opponent should succeed him. It is usual to fill the Provost's chair by promoting a Bailie or some member of the Council holding a prominent office, and at that time there were Magistrates who deserved promotion, but the Liberal wire-pullers would not think of it. Among the Magistrates there were such men as Bailies Williamson, Forrest, MacMurtrie, and Gemmell, Dean of Guild John Paul also, and several others who had done the town some service, but several of these were Conservatives, and blue was the colour not then to be tolerated. Indeed, it was 1888 before the first Conservative Provost was elected in Ayr during a period of at least a hundred years. People have become more tolerant now, and reasons other than political leanings enter into the bestowal of honours, certainly an improvement over the narrow-mindedness of fifty years ago.

Whatever may be the motives which animated the municipal wire-pullers on the retiral of Provost Miller, he and they very wisely fixed on a capital member to ascend the municipal chair. Primrose William Kennedy was the beau ideal in many respects of a Provost for the county town. He was the leading Banker in the county, was well known and highly respected, and could take his place in any company; accomplished, a good speaker, and really a most amiable personage, a more popular appointment could not have been made. Under P. W. Kennedy the rule of quietness continued. The burning questions were not of a very inflammable nature. Public improvements did not bulk largely in the public view. One of the most momentous brought forward was the purchase of a water-cart to water the streets and keep down the dust. Bailie Paterson was the champion of the water cart. There were water carts in the metropolis, and many large cities had adopted them to remove an evil which was a serious disadvantage to shopkeepers, and altogether there was much eloquence poured forth to justify the expenditure of a few pounds to provide a burgh horse and water cart to lay the dust and make Ayr equal to the greatest cities in the kingdom. It was a serious undertaking, but the difficulty was bravely faced after many debates and adjournments. I may only mention here that much less talk and delay is now made over expenditure a hundred times greater. A more serious question arose about this time also, though not involving any expenditure at all—an imaginary principle is often of more importance than money. The Nonconformist conscience existed then as now, and the marching of the magistrates preceded by the halberdiers to the Established Church every Sunday lay very heavily on this special conscience, and heaven and earth was to be moved to have the EYIL removed. In Provost Miller's time a proposal to abolish the Sunday church parade would not have been thought of. It would have robbed the Provost, in his own eyes, of a full half of the honour and glory of the provostship to go to the kirk like other folk. In fact, the halberdiers were the last honour which he would abolish, they being absolutely required to maintain the dignity of the office. Had it been possible to have had a band of music to accompany the magistrates as well it would have been insisted on; even a fife and drum would have been better than nothing. But when Provost Kennedy was elected to the provostship the daring idea was broached of having these halberdiers discontinued. P. W. Kennedy was not kirk greedy, indeed, prior to his appointment he was seldom in the church. Decent man! He had

many things to think about, and he preferred to think about them out in the green fields instead of taking them to church with him to distract his mind from a good, bad, or indifferent sermon. When he accepted the office of Provost, however, he accepted with it its duties and the customary obligations which his predecessors had fulfilled. He now regularly attended church, and when the movement was first set on foot to have the magisterial kirking abolished, one of the arguments used in defence of the custom was the beneficial effect it had produced on Provost Kennedy in inducing him to attend church regularly, whereas he had formerly seldom darkened a church door. This, however, did not appeal to the conscience of Mr Henry C. Gray, who was the moving spirit for its abolition. I have already alluded to this gentleman in an early chapter in connection with the Kirk Session action regarding a Sunday visit to Fisherton to attend service in the Parish Church there, necessitating a Sunday drive to the country; but still more obnoxious to my dissenting friend, Mr Gray, was the flaunting in his face of the "powers that be" going to the Parish Church of Ayr, giving a semblance of superiority of the Establishment not enjoyed by the Dissenters. Even the conversion of the Chief Magistrate to a regular church goer did not weigh with the pious (?) but bigoted mind of the objector. Had the procession been up Cathcart Street instead of the Kirk Port things might have been different—the evil lay not in the Magistrates going to a kirk, but in not going to "oor kirk." As it was, a crusade was entered into with vigour to have the Sunday parade abolished. There has been much less fighting over many more important questions. Mr H. C. Gray was a good fighter, and he did not spare himself, and he was not spared in return. It formed a burning question at election times, the local newspapers discussed it at great length, and many anonymous contributions were devoted to it. Among the best of them was one entitled "Henry's Dream," the first lines of which were—

"Are these the Halberts that I see before me,
Flaunting and flashing in the summer sun
Of Sunday morn?" &c.

A compromise was at length affected. The regular Sunday walk was abolished, and the church parade in future was to be restricted to the Kirking of the Council each November, and on any other special occasion on which the Magistrates and Council had to appear in state. It was a glorious victory this abolition of the Sunday Kirking of the Magistrates. It deprived the Auld Kirk of a weekly semblance of superiority, from which no one really suffered.

It was a recognition of respect to the Parent Presbyterian Kirk, which fractious daughters need not have grudged; it was the acknowledgment of a duty connecting Church and State, which members of any Church and belonging to the State had no reason to object to, for if it was wrong in a State to acknowledge a church collectively, those who compose the State need not recognise a church individually. In any case it came about that the Magistrates were put into the shade; their public recognition of the Church was gone. They did little to bring themselves before public notice during the week, and now to be hid from mortal view even on Sunday it almost seemed as if "Ichabod" had been written over them and their glory had departed. It was an intended blow at the Kirk, not at the Magistrates. The Kirk did not feel it, but I am afraid the Magistrates did. I do not wish to belittle our local authorities of former days. It is comforting to know that if they did not do "muckle good they didna do muckle harm." As noticed already in the forties and fifties of the last century, there was little public activity in Ayr. I notice from the file of the "Ayr Observer" that the reports of the Council meetings rarely exceeded a quarter of a column. It is very different now, when three or four columns are devoted to them, and withal members complain that they are not fully reported. Provost Kennedy presided over the Council with dignity, and the affairs of the Burgh were conducted quietly. Messrs John M'Murtrie, Gavin Gemmell, Andrew Paterson, and John M'Neillie discreetly discharged the duties of Bailies, and Mr W. B. Cuthbertson, after Mr Paul, made an excellent Dean of Guild. It may to some extent account for this quietness that the Council had not so much money in their hands to expend on alterations and improvements. They had no power to impose rates for public purposes. The whole burden of police, lighting, and cleansing of the Burgh fell upon the Common Good. The Burgh lands were being feued, always bringing in an increased income, which was always expended on some improvement. The customs levied at the New Bridge and the Horse Market Toll on all goods leaving the Burgh were the only other source of revenue in addition to their rents and feus. It must, however, be borne in mind that we had no such expenditure then as now. Cleansing, which now costs so much, at that time practically cost nothing. The scavenger (M'Harg) actually only paid a rent each year for the street sweepings, besides doing all the scavenging work free. The lighting expenses then were also very limited. Some streets were not lighted at all, and even the best were very indifferently lit. The

police force began to be increased to meet Government requirements, and we could now boast of four capable policemen, instead of three, acting as halberdiers to escort the Magistrates to church and make a show on special occasions, such as when the Judges put in an appearance in Ayr with Circuit Court, which was held every six months. The visit of the Circuit Court to Ayr was a red-letter day to the Town Council. Intimation was generally conveyed as to the time the train would arrive in Ayr with their Lordships. The Magistrates and Council were there awaiting their arrival with a military escort and a band. The Town Clerk had a busy time of it. He was master of ceremonies, introducing the Provost and Magistrates to the Judges. Then a procession was formed to march from the station to the King's Arms—the band of music, the escort, the Judges' carriage, the halberdiers, and Magistrates and Councillors, and a great crowd who saw in this a recognition of law and justice on a week day, similar to that of religion now abolished on Sunday. Their Lordships held a levee in the morning, previous to the opening of the Court, at which the whole Council generally were present. Then there was another grand procession from the King's Arms to the Court House, with music and an escort, and after the Court was over there was the usual dinner—rather a big assembly, consisting of judges, advocates, the county and burgh officials, a few county gentlemen and local gentlemen of note, the officers of the regiment at the Barracks, and others, making it rather an important function—solemn, yet enjoyable. It added to the solemnity and enjoyment that there were no speeches at the dinner. After it the presiding judge gave "The Queen," without comment, and the trumpeters in the lobby played the Queen's Anthem. This was followed by the toast of "The Provost and Magistrates of Ayr," the tune played being "Ayrshire Lasses." The Provost bowed his acknowledgment, and then formally gave "The Lords of Justiciary," the trumpeters played "They are jolly good fellows," and their lordships gravely gave their acknowledgments. The next toast was "The Bar," to which the music—if we can call it such—was "Fee him, fee father, fee him." Then came "Happy to meet," &c., and the function was over for six months. Unless it was for the enjoyment of a really good King's Arms dinner there was little else of enjoyment. You could sit and whisper to your neighbour, but it was not considered decorous to do anything else. I remember once a Provost, well known as a flowery speaker, attempted to do a little more in proposing the health of the judges than simply announce the toast.

He had fairly got up steam for a carefully prepared complimentary oration when he was brought to book by his lordship promptly reminding him that the etiquette of a Court dinner did not permit of speeches. It was well for the Provost this rebuke came after dinner, for it would have spoiled it; as it was I have no doubt it affected the digestion, or more probably induced increased libations of the judge's excellent wine, a very fit but poor revenge for the loss of the delivery of a carefully prepared speech. Those who are inclined to make comparisons between the social position and the culture of present-day Councillors with those who were our municipal rulers of former days, will perhaps take into consideration the following story. I cannot resist telling it. In computing the advantages and disadvantages of being a Town Councillor, I have heard the pros. and cons. put down somewhat in this fashion. On the one side were the loss of time involved in attending meetings, the increased subscriptions called for on account of holding such an honourable position, the expense of a contested election in November, and the possible riled feelings of being a defeated candidate. These were counterbalanced, the last-mentioned by a possible victory to be gained, and the joy of having beaten your opponent. Added to this was the honour and glory pertaining to the office, the annual dinner given by the Provost, and the summer water trip known as the water (?) inspection. To this had to be also added the possible other trips as deputations, &c.; and last but not least in those days were the half-yearly dinners given by the Judges. All these were included in the emoluments of the office. It is a sort of £ s. d. way of looking at the advantages and disadvantages of accepting office, and these will be valued by different people somewhat differently. There were two different opinions held as to the attendance at the Judges' dinners. I have heard it urged that every member of Council should attend to show their respect for the Judges; in fact it was a duty. On the other hand, I have heard it urged that only a certain number should go, as it showed a sort of greed if all went, as if a dinner was a matter of supreme importance. I am inclined to think the great majority looked upon it as a matter of duty, and they risked the odium of having it supposed that they were so greedy as to be unwilling to miss a good dinner which had not to be paid for. Be that as it may, it leads up to the story I have to tell. A newly-elected member of Council had attended the levee of the judges and had evidently been weighing in his mind the propriety of attending the dinner. The duty of going and the trouble of dressing for the occasion had been fairly

balanced, while the pleasures of the dinner had also been counted, balanced by the fact that there was little fun to be obtained out of it, it being such a solemn, dry affair—I mean dry in a certain sense. This junior councillor consulted me, telling me the considerations which weighed with him. I urged him to go, saying that it would be an experience to him and if he did not care for it he need not go again. I knew all the time "Barkus was willing." At last, however, the real reason for his hesitation leaked out. He frankly confessed that he was not accustomed to such HIGH LIFE! He had a dress coat, good enough for a Sacrament Sunday and for funerals, but not quite "up to the knocker" for a grand concern like a first-class dinner with lords and lawyers and other dignitaries in the King's Arms. It was a thing he knew little about, not even being sure how to partake of the different courses and the variety of wines. I persuaded him, however, to risk it, assuring him that his best coat well brushed would pass muster in the gaslight; and as for how he had to conduct himself, all he had to do was to try to appear as if such a dinner were of daily occurrence—in fact, just to look quite unconcerned, but at the same time to take a careful note of how his neighbours conducted themselves. He would be safe if he only imitated them, but to be sure and not to look the least anxious about anything. The only thing I took the liberty of imparting to him was a modicum of dinner etiquette, which was always to eat with his fork and never to put his knife to his mouth. (I had at a previous function seen him trying the sword trick, and for the credit of the Council Board I did not want it repeated.) He was a little amazed at my objection to him "feedin' wi' his knife." For instance, he urged, there were peas, "wee, trintling things," which would require both fork and knife to convey properly to his mouth. I insisted, however, on the fork as a sine qua non. He attended the dinner, sitting on the opposite side of the table from me, and I was glad to notice that he conducted himself with the greatest propriety, fully profiting by the advice I had given him. All went well till near the close of the dinner; even the pea difficulty seemed to have been surmounted, and he took his wine like a man who had been accustomed to drinking champagne all his life. He had evidently never tasted better ginger beer, and as good electroplate can scarcely be detected from genuine silver, he passed muster as a gentleman, though only a Councillor, until, unfortunately, pride had a fall. He was becoming too cock-sure that he could do everything as if he were to the manner born. The ices came round, and, thinking this

was just one of the little "fancy dishes" and there did not seem much of it (it looked so like a dainty piece of pudding), he attacked it as if puddings formed part of his daily food, with a pudding spoon, and conveyed one good spoonful to his mouth. The scene was changed, at least his face was. He could not swallow the ice (his mouth was on fire, he would gladly have sworn); he could not get rid of it on the table, or under it; he was in a terrible state. The contortions of his face were horrible, and he was writhing in anguish and fear that he had been poisoned or that a judgment had come upon him. Knowing the cause, I was wicked enough not to feel so anxious about him and, with difficulty concealing my mirth, I drew the attention of the Town Clerk (Mr John Pollock) and the Justiciary Clerk (Mr J. M. M'Cosh) to the spectacle. Both in alarm were about to rush to his assistance, thinking he was in an epileptic fit, if I had not restrained them. He gradually recovered, his mouthful of ice having dissolved, and he contrived to swallow it. His agony over, I gave him an encouraging look and a sign to take another glass of wine, which he did, returning me a wan smile as I explained the cause of the escapade to my neighbours, who, as wicked as myself, could not help enjoying it.

Circuit Courts held in Ayr are now, however, of rare occurrence. An increasing population has not brought with it an increase of serious crime. It is somewhat remarkable that the last execution took place in Ayr exactly fifty years ago. The execution was on the morning of Thursday, 11th May, 1854. The person who then suffered the last penalty of the law was Alexander Cuningham, labourer, Girvan, who had been condemned to death at the Circuit Court held in Ayr three weeks previously for murdering his wife. The Judge who presided at the Circuit Court referred to was the famous Lord Cockburn, but Lord Ivory took the notes in the case, and charged the Jury. There were sixty-one witnesses cited in the case, and the trial occupied the greater part of two days. The defence was ably conducted by two young advocates, the junior of whom was Mr Shand, afterwards Lord Shand, who died only a few months ago. A very clever speech on behalf of the prisoner was made by Mr Moncrieff (not the future Lord Justice Clerk), but the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. It fell to Lord Cockburn, as the presiding judge, to pass sentence of death, and it is a rather singular circumstance that his Lordship (who had been suffering from illness all the time the Court was sitting) was dead before the man whom he had sentenced to death. Two persons have had the sentence of

death passed on them at Ayr since that time—a travelling tinker known as "the piper," for fatally stabbing a man on the road near Holmston Toll on a Friday night of Ayr races, and a young man named Bell for murdering a young girl near Annbank station, but in both cases the Home Secretary saw grounds for granting a reprieve. In another Ayrshire case tried in Glasgow in October, 1888, Mary Boyd, a Dalry woman, was sentenced to death for the murder of her grandchild, but in this instance also a reprieve was granted. The execution, as was customary, took place behind the prison, the scaffold being erected on what is now known as the Jail Square, the condemned prisoners coming out of a door in the wall which is now built up. There was generally a large crowd gathered to see the last penalty of the law carried out, the scaffold being guarded on some occasions by a body of special constables, at other times by a company of the Ayrshire Yeomanry. Of course, this was long before the Steven Fountain was placed there, and there was no esplanade wall. It was a common saying when anyone was predicting an untoward fate to anyone who had incurred their serious displeasure, that they would die "facing Arran." I did not think of going to see the last "hanging." Some years previous to the execution of Cuningham I had, out of curiosity and thoughtlessness, gone to see a criminal named M'Wheelan hanged. He had been convicted of the murder of a young man near Kilmarnock, the sole object of which seemed to be for the sake of a silver watch. There was an immense crowd, and I got jammed in the crush, from which I would gladly have escaped when the culprit appeared with a black suit and a white nightcap, accompanied by the hangman. I saw the fatal drop, and also saw it in imagination, I think, every night again for months afterwards, which quite cured me of any desire to see another execution. I leave, however, the gruesome subject, and close this chapter, returning in another to a continuation of my reminiscences of our municipal rulers of half a century ago.

CHAPTER XXI.

Local Authorities—(Continued).

Before leaving the Lords of Justiciary, I may relate an anecdote which created much amusement at the time. Lords Cowan and Ardmillan were both Ayr men, and had been educated at Ayr Academy. On their first visit to Ayr after being raised to the bench, the Provost and Magistrates deemed it a fitting occasion on which to confer on them the freedom of the Royal Burgh. This is an honour seldom conferred, being reserved for distinguished natives of the "auld toun" or very distinguished visitors. Thus it came about that General Grant on his visit to Ayrshire received the honour, and Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith and his brother John, the Mayor of Melbourne, both natives of Ayr, were likewise favoured. Lords Cowan and Ardmillan being also natives were perhaps not aware of the great anxiety and time which was spent over the deliberation as to how the honour was to be conferred so as to increase its importance to them, and at the same time to add lustre to the dignity of the Council conferring it. It was an anxious time for Provost MacNeillie, who had to make the presentation. His predecessor probably could have done it no better, but even he in his anxiety to secure a good Provost on his retirement is said to have canvassed against Mr MacNeillie, using as an argument for somebody else to be elected, that the Provostship should always be conferred on a scholar—and—and—well, I don't want to enter into detail. Both Messrs Paterson and MacNeillie were respectable leather merchants, so that either of them was a scholar—a classical scholar I mean—I would not like to vouch for. Probably Provost Paterson during his tenure of office found that scholarship was an immense advantage to a Provost, and it showed a commendable degree of common sense on his part if he found out his own deficiency, and wished the town not to make the same mistake in electing another Provost, and to make sure that even though a leather merchant, he should be a scholar as well. There was also the additional reflection that even with an implicit belief in the assurance that there is nothing like leather, the genial Provost Paterson may have thought it not desirable to impose too much of it on the guid auld toon, and that one term of the Provostship, extending to three years, was sufficient for a tanner. This kindly feeling, which I would not like

to insinuate with a little jealousy was not, however, given effect. Whatever may have been thought of the culture of the two tanners the one succeeded the other, and even bettered his predecessor's run, Provost MacNeillie having had three terms of the honour, thus extending it to nine years. To do all our Provosts justice, both before and after the time of Provost P. W. Kennedy, they have not made profession of being eminent scholars. They have all aimed at doing their best for the Royal Burgh, and probably, as is often the case in other quarters, those who thought themselves most worthy of being classed as good scholars were least entitled to it. I might put it the other way—those who were conscious of any shortcoming had the least reason to be so.

The story I have to tell, however, is concerning Councillor, afterwards Bailie, Rae, who had already made his mark in the Council as a speaker unequalled by any of his brethren, and with a keen eye to a good joke regardless of results, was irrepressible, and on important occasions such as conferring the freedom of the burgh on important citizens was not considered safe by his more sober-minded colleagues who were quite content with mediocrity. The concern of the Provost and Magistrates, and their "Maister," the Burgh Engineer, was to prevent their erratic confrere bringing himself into notoriety and themselves into some disrepute by any escapade which would be infra dig. at such an important meeting. Accordingly Dean of Guild Wylie, a staid, tall colleague, and the Master of Works himself were told off to "keep Rae in order." They knew they had their work cut out for them, more especially as their dangerous companion, being the best speaker in the Council, could not well be refused the opportunity of giving one of the more important toasts after the dinner. All passed off well until it came to the toast with which Rae had been entrusted. Wyllie and M'Derment, one on each side of Rae, had been carefully priming him—as they thought—with what he SHOULD say, and were satisfied that they had him fairly in hand, and that a most decorous speech would be forthcoming. Alas! for the hopes even of the most astute of Councillors! Councillor Rae had a mind of his own, a wit of his own, and possibly was even a little riled at the idea of being thought to be in leading strings by those who at least were not his superiors in any respect whatever. He had his speech prepared, but by no means on the lines which his tutors had fondly imagined. He commenced his speech as follows:—"Provost, my Lords and gentlemen, it gives me the greatest pleasure to take part in the pro-

ceedings of this day, and to be honoured by my fellow Councillors by being asked to propose an important toast on this occasion." (His caretakers were delighted at this auspicious commencement of his speech, and testified to their delight.) "We are met," he continued, "to do honour to two of our most distinguished townsmen, an honour well deserved, and one which has given satisfaction to the whole community." (Great applause.) "I repeat," he continued, "it is an honour well deserved, and the Magistrates and Council have been wisely guided in coming unanimously to the resolution, the fulfilment of which is taking place to-day. (Renewed applause.) "But," he continued, while a shade of something like dismay spread over the company. "But," he repeated, in clear and distinct tones, "I stand here more deserving of such an honour than even my Lords Cowan and Ardmillan"—(hisses)—but the undaunted speaker held his ground and repeated "more deserving of honour than they, not withstanding the great height to which they have risen." By this time Messrs Wyllie and M'Derment would fain have sunk through the floor, and the Provost seemed as if he would have an apoplectic fit, and the whole audience were hissing and groaning while their Lordships, I have no doubt, were wishing they had it in their power to give the audacious speaker penal servitude for life. Rae remained inflexible during the storm, and was resolved to finish his speech. The next sentence quite altered the feelings of the meeting. Waiting for a little approach to silence, he added, "They have certainly risen to a great height; they have been raised TO the BENCH, but I have been raised FROM IT." There was a pause, the hissing ceased. The point of the joke did not appear just at once, but in a few seconds, as it dawned on them, there was first a laugh, then a roar, the whole audience being convulsed. Even the Provost's mind, not very acute at the best, took it in, and he joined in the laughter. All except the two guests saw it, and it was only when the Provost in a paroxysm of laughter explained the position in the following words:—"He was once a tailor, noo he's a merchant," that their Lordships joined in the merriment. The mirth was again renewed, when Lord Cowan gave the supposed culprit a pinch of snuff out of a handsome silver presentation snuff-box, while Mr Rae, not to be outdone in showing a friendly feeling, reciprocated by handing his Lordship HIS three-halfpence tin snuff-box, a memento of the days before he was raised from the bench. Needless to say after that the proceedings passed off well, only I think if anything Councillor Rae was the lion of the evening and not the new-made Burgesses.

It must not be thought the pleasure and honour attending municipal dignatories are unalloyed. Probably the same desires and shortcomings animated many others, and as these are not gratified, a feeling of antagonism springs up, and, judging by themselves, motives are imputed not creditable to any one, far less to persons in authority. Human nature, I presume, is human nature all over, and envy, spite, and all uncharitableness find means sometimes worse than pin-pricks to hurt and annoy. I am safe in saying Ayr has been singularly free from any really discreditable tricks being with justice laid to the charge of any of those in authority. I hear of other places where such a sense of honour as well as honesty does not exist. I am not aware of any case of real dishonesty having ever been perpetrated by any of our local authorities in my whole experience. We have, of course, members of Council who pay special attention to the interests of the ward which they represent and in which their property may be situated. This special attention is doubtless a personal benefit to the Councillor, for it directly benefits himself, and it adds to his popularity in the ward and helps him at election times. It is surely straight-lacedness, however, which would prevent any improvement which benefits all because an individual should share in it. Besides, these things cannot be done in a corner, and public judgment can be brought to bear if the so-called public improvement is of such a nature as to be only of a limited personal nature, and so be taking advantage of a position for personal aggrandisement. Still public men are often assailed and their motives most unjustly characterised as being despicable, when they are really honourable and by no means deserving of the opprobrium cast upon them. It is often the most despicable characters themselves who impute motives, and, as a rule, honesty lives down any slander. Illustrative of Ayr as it was, so as to compare it with Ayr as it is, I may tell an old story which marks the truth of what I am saying. The present Cemetery was not long completed, and the Committee of Management and the Cemetery keeper deserved every credit for the excellent way in which it was kept. The keeper had a small conservatory in which he struck his flowers for the decoration of the place, and some wicked people, putting two and two together, found out that some members of Committee were also fond of flowers, and did not hesitate to spread a slander, arising from which the following parody on "The Raven" was soon put in circulation:—

THE FLOWERS!

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and
weary
Over sinful deeds committed in the years that went before—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a
tapping
As of some one gently rapping—rapping at my garden
door.
"'Tis some midnight rake," I muttered, "tapping at my
garden door—
Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak November,
And each separate standing member wrought his ghost upon
the floor;
Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow
From my "nips" surcease of sorrow—sorrow for my hap-
less corps—
For the weeds and weakly members whom the public love
to bore—
Nameless now for evermore.

And the thought of evil actions, people wronged and cursed
factions,
Thrilled me—filled with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood
repeating—
"'Tis some midnight rake entreating entrance at my garden
door;
Some poor midnight rake entreating entrance at my garden
door;
That it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
Out I went to listen, though I might not venture more;
And 'twould serve no end dissembling, but the fact is I
was trembling
Lest the Fenians were assembling in the lane beside the
door—
Here I summoned all my courage, and I opened wide the
door;
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there, won-
dering, fearing,
While the moments that were speeding seemed as long and
dreary hours;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only words there spoken were the whispered words "The Flowers!"
This was whispered, and an echo murmured back the words "The Flowers!"
Merely this and "they are ours."

Back into my chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping, something louder than before,
Snatching up a glass of brandy, which I swigg'd off pretty handy,
I said, "I'm not worth candy if I can't the cause explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore—
'Tis the barrow—nothing more."

Down the garden then I hurried, op'd the door—a little flurried,
In there stepped our easy Sexton with geraniums galore.
Not the least obesance made he, not a minute stopped or stayed he;
"I'll come again (then said he) on the quiet with some more,
I'll come and trim your garden, and your greenhouse, as before—
But 'mum's' the word, and nothing more."

Then those pretty flowers beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
By their freshness and their beauty, and the lovely scent they bore;
I said, "Though I and others, who have been to me like brothers,
Have got flowers which were another's to increase our stock and store—
'Tis our right and nothing more."

Much I marvelled then on hearing that someone was quickly nearing,
And, hair on end, I hastened off to barricade the door;
But the little fiend M'Callum, from the foul cave of Abdullam,
Shouted loud, "I couldn't 'gull' him," and my garden wall came o'er—
Cried aloud, "The Shrubs," "The Flowers," and my garden wall came o'er—
Came and gazed, and nothing more.

Startled by my stillness, broken with those words this man had spoken,
Doubtless, said I, you are come to scan and note my stock and store;
But know that I'm your master, and unmerciful disaster—
You will follow fast and faster if you dare to utter more—
If you dare to tell the public but the truth and nothing more—
I shall crush you evermore.

But the people now are talking, now are talking, now are talking,
And I fear the public see me as they never saw before—
Yet I never shall cease praying, nor ever cease obeying
Those base passions which are swaying, and have swayed me heretofore,
Which in Religion's guise I've hugg'd and will hug evermore—
Yes, evermore.

There was much in the anonymous, and I may say scurrilous, literature in circulation forty or fifty years ago, which had better be buried in oblivion. The above, however, is not of this character; though a parody it does not come far after Poe's "Raven," and the gentle insinuation of the appropriation of the flowers relieves it from any charge of coarseness. Reading between the lines now we can see the suggestion, which must reflect on some one; but if we think of the times, and how well every one would understand the hints which can be taken from it, we can easily see how some were hard hit. I question if at the present day we have any persons hit so hard whether they deserve it or not.. There is a coarseness about present day hitting, while in the foregoing it is in no way visible, and I gladly give it as a fair specimen of the poetry of the auld times, worthy of being kept, and, not like some, kept for its abomination.

Charles Dickens has immortalised a Pecksniff and a Uriah Heap, both creations, approximations to which are unfortunately to be found in many places. Ayr, the home of "honest men," had, of course, some who were somewhat of the same nature, and in the divisions which existed in political and ecclesiastical affairs, and social as well, they were, it may be admitted, a few exceptions which I will be generous enough to say only proved the rule. Without going further and opening up old sores, I herewith give a specimen of what was applied to a type of the Pecksniff

clan now almost forgotten. I give this specimen more to illustrate the nature of the poetic effusions of the time than of the personage or the class to which it refers. It is entitled

PIOUS HENRY'S PRAYER.

Oh, Thou wha in the Heavens dost bide,
From whom we mortals canna hide
Oor fauts or virtues, hear (aside)
The earnest prayer,
O' him wha fain wad slip-shod ride
O'er ancient Ayr.

Thou kens fou weel my inmost heart,
Thou kens I play the dooble pairt;
But, losh, Thou kens, if I am spair't,
I'll ser' Thee weel;
Or should Thou think Thy gifts ill wair't,
I'll ser' the Deil.

An' tae this end I humbly pray,
That Thou shalt on an early day,
Confoun' and blast ilk senseless fae
Wha'd ever dare
Tae keep thy servant, Henry ——,
Frae ruling Ayr.

Thou'st gi'en me rowth o' gab and gear,
Thou'st gi'en me rowth o' cheek, I'll swear,
An' Thou hast gi'en me power to 'pear,
In some folk's een,
A perfect saint, but Thou hast ne'er
Made me a frien.'

Thou kens I am a mortal cheat,
A base, suborning hypocrite;
But fools are here wha, 'neath my feet,
Would lay their hair,
An' actions, words, or ocht else eat,
My fame tae spare.

Puir silly gowks, they dinna ken
What for I fecht, what for I len',
They think I think them clever men,
An' never dream
I'm trying hard tae catch the ten,
Tae croon my scheme.

I may be beat, as I hae been,
In throwing dust in thae folk's een;
But help me, Lord, tae keep the screen
'Twixt them an' me,
An' in I'll chirt mysel', I ween,
Their chief tae be.

I add another as a further illustration, referring to the same individual; and between the two it will not be difficult to read a character which, if truly painted, comes not far behind Dickens's strongest pictures. It is entitled,

HENRY'S EPITAPH.

Here humbled Harry lies below—
Satan, I pray ye, watch 'im;
Wi' pawky tricks, and praying, too,
Ye'll find it hard to match 'im.

One naturally wonders when there existed a law to prevent libel how the author or publisher of the foregoing could escape. The partial administration of the law may be judged by the following. A series of poetical effusions had been appearing in the "Observer" descriptive of characters which unfortunately were and are too numerous in our midst. The characters were faithfully and cleverly drawn, and many of the pieces have since been published in volume form. The characters selected were such as "The Liar," "The Hypocrite," "The Drunkard," "The Cheat," and such like and among them appeared "The Pharisee." This can be republished now, but it seems strange that such a fair picture of a modern Pharisee should have been brought before the Court of Session, and the publishers of it mulct in substantial damages as if there were only one modern Pharisee in Ayr, and no liars, drunkards, or hypocrites connected with the Auld Toun to apply the pictures to themselves. Readers may judge if the Court was really a Court of Justice in awarding damages. It is to be regretted that this is not a solitary instance of law and justice being an unknown quantity.

THE PHARISEE.

As base a coin as e'er was cast;
As vile a forge as ever passed;
An impudent and lying cheat;
A specious worthless counterfeit
As e'er was clipped when cunning failed,
Or to a grocer's counter nailed.

In silver coating, thin and faine,
He passes current for a saint;
But tried or tested—trashy thing!
He lacks the true metallic ring,
And proves to be—both heart and head—
A wretched, treach'rous bit of lead.

'Neath "Lib'ral" name, and "Lib'ral" creed,
He hides his tyranny and greed;
His life of plots and plans and snares
Is cloaked by piety and prayers;
A visage long and sheepy eyes
Conceal his meanness, lust, and lies;
And like a cat which through the house
Pursues an unsuspecting mouse,
When hunting hard some hated foe
His step is ever soft and slow.

He looks a babe, but never tires
Of drawing strings and pulling wires,
Or making balls of filth and mire,
For partisans to throw or fire,
Or setting traps with craft not small
Into which innocents may fall.

Texts from his lips profusely flow
Though curses rise full-blood below;
Although with sins like crimson dyed
He is elect and sanctified,
And goes to bed a Christian true
Though like a fiend the whole day through.

He never runs into excess
Save in the dark or in a press,
And when he sets forth tea and toast
The local clergy call him "host,"
And, flattered well, in after days,
His spotless virtues loudly praise!

Move, act, or spout, from day to day
Self is the god he serves always;
Yet every Sunday sees him shine
Before some ranter or divine,
Devout and humble 'midst the sheen
Of burnished nails and frieze so green!

A foe relentless, as a friend
He is more dang'rous in the end;
For love and charity no part
Have found within his callous heart,
And any kindness he may show
Is but the feint before the blow.

Act as his tool, bend back or limb
To form a stepping-stone for him,
Then all is well; but cross his path
And you have waked the tiger's wrath;
His fangs he then like serpent shows,
And forth his deadly venom flows.

A faithful picture here is given
Of one who, hand and glove with Heaven,
Is running at an awful pace
To Darkness, and the—"Other Place!"
Look round your doors—your neighbours scan
And tell me if you know the man.

CHAPTER XXII.

Municipal Elections.

In commenting on the more prominent elections which have taken place during the last 50 or 60 years, which may be as noteworthy from a local point of view as Imperial elections, it is perhaps matter of regret that more of the personal element will become so prominent. Many are still alive who took an active part in these elections, and at least their descendants are numerous, and it is no pleasure to open up what may be old sores by commenting on defeats. That, I can assure my readers, is not compensated for by any pleasure there is in recording victories which recall pleasurable recollections to many. If I give pictures of Ayr life of half a century ago, and if any of these bring back unpleasant recollections, I am sorry for it, though I think they need not. Many of what may have been considered defeats at the time, and to be regretted, have turned out blessings in disguise, and stranger still, following many of the contests which took place long ago between parties who seemed to be mutual enemies for life, it was not uncommon to see these antagonistic parties now sailing in the same boat. I hope I may not be considered too egotistical, if in narrating the various incidents which recur to my mind, I interject a comment here and there, which I hope is free from the strong prejudice of the time in which it happened. I hope I am able to smile now at the exuberance of less mature years and modify strong opinions as experience teaches all to do; time has also brought with it the feeling that, then and even now, we might err. At all events, it can never be considered a sign of weakness to admit that we are wiser to-day than yesterday. Perhaps I could give no better illustration of this possibility of changing minds than the case of Bailie Rae, who is so noteworthy that he cannot escape being frequently noticed in these reminiscences. The Bailie was not one who could be kept under and forced to play a very secondary part. He was a splendid fighter, and was generally in the foremost ranks when there was a hard knock going. If he received any knocks he, as a rule, repaid them with interest. He was one to be reckoned with, so that his allies were not always the same. There were frequent arrangements by municipal parties, and the Bailie was no blind follower of any leader; very often, like "Hal o' the Wynd," he fought

for his own hand, and if at one time a certain combination was formed for a given purpose his support was such an acquisition that it was always taken into account, so that when another combination for other purposes was formed the Bailie might be found separate from former colleagues, and in alliance with those with whom he had at one time been in stiff opposition. He was not a staunch politician. He leaned towards Conservatism, but personal influence intervened, and perhaps one of the hardest hits he ever received was at one election in which he had both a burgh and a county vote. He voted Liberal in the burgh and Conservative in the county, which one of his greatest friends, Mr Drinnan, of Auchenlee, characterised as the curious consistency of the Bailie, who could thus by his vote save the country from utter ruin one day, only by another vote to make that ruin certain on the next. No man, however, could stand a dig of this kind better than Bailie Rae, and Mr Drinnan and he remained life-long friends. At municipal elections, in which he always took a prominent part, he generally came out well up in the poll; in two different election, however, he underwent terrible defeats. Still he not only survived but came up smiling on another occasion. It was not that he was so erratic as the public themselves, as was fully illustrated by a Parochial Board election. One year Provost Kilpatrick, who had been chairman for several years, was displaced for some reason and Bailie Rae elected in his stead, and without reason as far as the Bailie was concerned, next year in a new election the previous victor and vanquished changed places, and it was all the more remarkable that at each election these were decisive majorities which had thus been overturned.

For at least thirty years the Bailie was a prominent figure in all municipal elections. In more senses than one he rose "from the Bench." He fought his way into the Council, where he was always a prominent figure. He took defeat well, always returning, always coming up smiling, and seeming to become more popular after each fall. When he was elected Bailie there were four members of Council whose feelings were so strong against him that they left the Council, refusing to sit with him as a Magistrate, yet he continued a Magistrate for many years, and it is no exaggeration to say that for every Magistrate Ayr has had better, there have been at least half-a-dozen worse. There were few who could equal him in repartee. He was invaluable to his party at the heckling attending any of the municipal elections. At one of these elections

there was a motion among the electors that the expenses attending deputations to London were too high. It seems the allowance for a member of Council going to London, paying all his own expenses, is two guineas per day. It certainly looks handsome, but it must be remembered that deputationists are public men, sacrificing their own time, and to uphold the dignity of the burgh they cannot be expected to put up in the cheapest hotels, and in many respects when they go to Rome they must do as the Romans do, so that after all two guineas do not leave much change behind when all expenses are paid. There are many, however, who think the thing can be done for less, and among others was Capt. Dick, a retired sea captain who could speak from experience, and he undertook to heckle the Bailie at a meeting, and he there demanded to know if, on the score of economy, Bailie Rae would see this charge reduced.

The Bailie declined, on the ground that the labourer was worthy of his hire, and that the sum allotted was only reasonable in the circumstances.

The Captain maintained that the sum was an extortionate one to allow for any such expenses. He himself had frequently been staying in London and his outlay did not exceed a fifth part of the sum allowed.

The Bailie's reply was a crusher. "Do you mean to say, sir, you would ask the representatives of the Royal Burgh of Ayr, when they go to London on municipal business, to stay in a low tripe shop?" The uproar and laughter which greeted this prevented Captain Dick following up his argument, and the Bailie carried the day. On another occasion, however, the Bailie was not quite so successful, and came off second best—at least he had the laugh turned against him. It was also at an election meeting, and after having delivered an eloquent address, embodying all the prominent topics before the public, he closed his remarks, as is usual on such occasions, by intimating that he was prepared to answer any question on any subject which any elector or non-elector chose to put to him.

A voice from the back of the hall was heard—"Bailie Rae, will you answer this question in a straightforward manner?"

The Bailie—"Certainly; I am willing to give all the information in my power."

Questioner—"Who was the author of Burns' poems?"

What answer the Bailie could or would have given is not known. The audience was convulsed with laughter, and the Bailie's idea of the authorship remains unrecorded.

One more illustration of Bailie Rae's happy retorts, which frequently brought him out of difficulties, may be given. He was in London giving evidence before a Parliamentary Committee on the Burgh Bill. As is usual on these occasions the counsel for the promotion of the bill makes the most of the importance of his witnesses. In the Bailie's case he had to bring out that the witness was an important citizen of Ayr. He was a Magistrate, and had been a member of the Town Council for twenty years; he was also a large merchant doing an extensive business, and had branches of his business in Dumfries and elsewhere, and altogether was a very important personage. The opposing counsel had, of course, the duty assigned him of underrating the importance of the witness.

He asked the nature of his business.

A.—A draper and clothier.

Q.—What was his particular department?

The Bailie saw at once he intended to have a joke at his expense by bringing down the merchant!—the draper and clothier—to be nothing more nor less than a tailor, the ninth part of a man, so he at once replied, "I am in no way ashamed of my particular department of the business; it is the tailoring department," and looking at the Queen's Counsel, and noticing that under his official robe he had a very indifferent pair of trousers he pulled out his yard tape, adding, "If your credit's good I'll be very glad to measure you for a pair of trousers, which I see you very much need." The laughter of the Court was such that the Bailie's evidence was very soon closed, and the discomfiture of the opposition Counsel was complete.

The most extraordinary municipal election of last century was that of 1864. It was extraordinary in many respects. First of all the burning question was the Provostship. There were two candidates brought forward—Mr John M'Neillie and Mr William Pollock. The result depended to some extent on the returns of the November election, but to secure the return of Mr Pollock, five at least of the six members must be in his favour. The constituency at that time was well known to be undoubtedly Liberal, so much so that at a Parliamentary election a Conservative candidate was not brought forward, his chance being thought hopeless. On political grounds, therefore, Mr Pollock had little chance. Politics, however, was not everything in the municipal election on this occasion, Mr Pollock, an undoubted Conservative, having the warm support of several prominent Liberals. For the six seats there were five candidates standing who supported Mr Pollock,

and four who supported Mr M'Neillie. It seemed a forlorn hope that either party could carry all their candidates. Among those who supported Mr Macneille was Bailie Rae, at that time Convener of the Trades, and the members of that body being of considerable influence, generally made it a point to have their convener in the Council. Another was Robert Howie Smith, the editor of the "Ayrshire Express," a very popular candidate, a ready speaker, and in many ways of great influence, and the chances were all in his favour of being returned well up in the poll. The third supporter of Mr Macneille was Mr P. B. Hill, his brother-in-law, also very popular, and in every way likely from his strong connection to be certain of a seat. The fourth Macneille candidate was Bailie Macready, and even if he was considered the weakest of the four, still his chance was good, and to all appearance the betting was decidedly in favour of Mr M'Neille's party. The five candidates on the other side were undoubtedly strong men as well. Still, it was like hoping against hope that the five could all get in. Powerful electoral machinery was all against them, and I well remember the success of Mr Pollock was considered an impossibility. The first indication of public feeling was given at a public meeting at which the candidates were giving an account of their stewardship. The late Bailie M'Lauchlan was being heckled, and on being asked which of the candidates he would support for the Provostship promptly replied, "Provost Pollock!" There was loud applause and laughter—applause at the declaration of his intentions (the other candidates having hedged)—and laughter at the "taking it for granted" success of his candidate, Mr Pollock being then a Bailie. The applause, however, which was mixed with only a few hisses, showed unmistakeably how public feeling was going; still the chances remained very much as I have stated. That either side would carry all their men was unlikely, and certainly the party running only four candidates for the six seats had a better chance than the other party running five. It is the unexpected that often happens. So far from defeat of the five, there was never a more astonishing success. The whole five supporters of Mr Pollock were returned at the top of the poll, and the weakest of Mr Macneille's was returned at the bottom, evidently owing his return to the spare votes Mr Pollock's supporters had given him. The three most likely to be returned were left out, showing a concensus of popular feeling in favour of Mr Pollock which could not be gainsaid. It was seen afterwards that the entire six members could have been returned quite as easily

as the five, and so have made the victory still more remarkable. It would have been well had it been so, for again the unexpected happened. Mr Fullarton was a member of the Council at the time, and was reckoned a supporter of Mr Pollock. There was every reason to believe he was, and certainly it never occurred to any one to think otherwise. Only after the poll was declared, and the Pollock party were rejoicing over what was thought their complete success, was any indication given that there was any doubt in the matter. The doubt became a certainty, however, at the Council meeting at which the election of ithe Provost and officials took place. Perhaps nothing could better explain the position of matters than a copy of the report as it appeared in the local press at the time. A statement of facts is often more explicit than reasons. It shows the public voting as well as the voting at the Council, and it is not difficult to read between the lines how the result was arrived at. There is aye a wheel within a wheel. The following is the newspaper report of the time:—

AYR MUNICIPAL ELECTION.

The annual election of Town Council took place on Tuesday last in the Assembly Rooms. The following is the result:—

	At 12 o'Clock.	At One.	At Two.	Close of the Poll.
Pollock, ...	78	116	140	267
M'Lachlan, ...	81	118	138	254
Templeton, ...	80	118	141	246
Baird, ...	77	113	132	229
Gray, ...	75	111	131	226
M'Creadie, ...	43	70	89	200
Smith, ...	37	59	75	184
Rae, ...	28	48	67	155
Hill, ...	24	41	58	150

AYR TOWN COUNCIL.

The first meeting of this Council, as reconstituted, was held in the Court House—Bailie Goudie, as acting Chief Magistrate, presiding. There was a full attendance of members.

The Rev. Mr Menzies having opened the meeting with prayer, the Town Clerk read the return of Tuesday's election, the standing orders, and the Act against Bribery and Corruption, and thereafter administered the oath of allegiance to the entire Council.

ELECTION OF PROVOST.

Bailie Goudie then rose and said—Gentlemen, in consequence of Provost Paterson's retirement from our body,

which renders the civic chair vacant, it now falls upon us to confer upon one of our number the highest municipal distinction which it is in our power to bestow. I have much pleasure in nominating for the office of Provost of this burgh Mr Fullarton, a gentleman whose business qualifications and thorough integrity, as well as his long and faithful services as a Town Councillor, extending over a period of 17 years, well entitle him to any honour we can award him. By the choice of his fellow-councillors, and with the approval of the community, he ably officiated for many years as a magistrate of this burgh, and at present he holds the honourable and onerous office of Dean-of-Guild, discharging its duties in a manner at once most creditable to himself and satisfactory to his fellow-townsmen. I beg again, therefore, formally to nominate Mr Fullarton as Provost of this burgh.

Dean of Guild Fullarton—I am fully sensible of the honour you have proposed to confer upon me, and have sincerely to thank you for this mark of your confidence. But you know I have been one year in office as Dean of Guild, and, as I am anxious to do my best for the interest of the town, I wish to continue as your Dean, hoping that I may continue to please you gentlemen of the Council and the constituency at large in that capacity. I therefore beg respectfully to decline the office of Provost; but, perhaps, at some other time, if you think proper to repose your confidence in me, I may ask your support.

Bailie Goudie—In consequence of Dean of Guild Fullarton's declinature, I have now the pleasure of nominating Mr Macneille, a gentleman who has already been in the magistracy and served as a member of Council, thereby enjoying the confidence of his fellow-townsmen for a long period of years. Highly successful as a merchant in this his native town, known for his uprightness and integrity, occupying a high place in the estimation of his fellow-townsmen, and having ample time, and even leisure, to devote to public business, I fully anticipate that Mr Macneille, if elected, will very worthily fill the office of Chief Magistrate; and, with hearty and united co-operation, I hope, as a body, we shall long be able to maintain and extend the interests of a corporation and community in the welfare and prosperity of which all of us have so deep a concern. I have now again formally to propose Mr Macneille.

Treasurer Erskine—I beg to second the motion of Bailie Goudie, believing that if we advance Mr Macneille to this honourable position, he will fill it efficiently, and with every desire to promote the prosperity of the burgh.

Mr Cuthbertson—I had hoped, sir, that on this occasion we were to be spared a disagreeable contest for the civic chair. I had fondly hoped, after the very striking demonstration made at the poll on Tuesday by our constituents, when the contest was virtually a contest for who was to fill the chair, that other gentlemen who might be aspiring to the office would have seen cause to bow with graceful deference to that plain and unmistakeable manifestation of public opionion. It seems, however, that this has not been considered the proper way to proceed; and it is therefore now my duty to nominate Mr Pollock, a gentleman who for 21 years consecutively has filled the office of Town Councillor. Hhe has also filled the offices of junior and senior bailie, as well as that of Den of Guild, and in every one of these offices I have no hesitation in saying (and I say it without fear of contradiction) he discharged his duties very much to the satisfaction of the community, and to the gentlemen connected with the Council, as well as with great honour to himself. From his experience, business habits, and clear, shrewd intelligence, I am satisfied we could not get a better person to fill the office, and I have, therefore, much pleasure in nominating him for the Provostship.

Mr M'Iwraith I have much pleasure in seconding the nomination of Mr Pollock. I perfectly agree with every word Mr Cuthbertson has said. From the very decided expression of opinion on Tuesday, it is not good taste, to say the least of it, to bring any other gentleman forward at this time. I have the more pleasure in seconding the motion as one who has held Liberal principles ever since I knew what politics were; but it is on other grounds that I have the pleasure to second the nomination—simply because we are now doing an act of justice to Mr Pollock for his long and faithful services to this community. I positively deny that there is any truth in the statements which have been put forth that he has been brought forward on political grounds. Such is not the fact.

The Council then divided, with the following result:—

For Mr Macneille—Bailie Goudie, Treasurer Erskine, Dean of Guild Fullarton, C. B. Rowan, R. M'Callum, J. Macneille, A. Hunter, R. A. Miller, and James M'Creadie—9.

For Mr Pollock—W. B. Cuthbertson, J. M'Ilwraith, James Ferguson, W. Pollock, A. M'Lachlan, James Templeton, James Baird, and H. C. Gray—8.

Provost Macneille, on being sworn into office and assuming the chair, said—Bailie Goudie, Mr Erskine, and gentlemen, I thank you kindly for the manner you have been pleased to speak of me, that my conduct has been

such as to deserve your approbation. I can assure you that such a testimony of goodwill from you is most grateful to me. I do hope I rightly estimate the honour you have now conferred upon me. In attempting to discharge the duties of so responsible a position as your Provost, wherein I may come short in their execution I do trust you will extend to me the same considerate kindness as you have now shown to me. Having, however, the utmost confidence in you, who have managed your own affairs with so much credit to yourselves, I am sure the best interests of the town are safe in your hands. I again thank you, gentlemen, for this renewed expression to me of respect and esteen.

Mr Pollock—I beg also to tender my warmest acknowledgments to those gentlemen who have supported me on this occasion.

Election of Junior Bailie.

Provost Macneille—I beg to propose Mr M'Creadie as Junior Bailie. From his sagacity, uprightness, and sound judgment, I am sure he will faithfully discharge the duties of the office.

Dean of Guild Fullarton—I have great pleasure in seconding the nomination of Mr M'Creadie. Having been acquainted with that gentleman for a long time, and knowing his good business habits, I am certain he will discharge the duties of the Junior Bailieship with satisfaction to the community and to ourselves, as well as creditably to himself.

Bailie M'Creadie—I thank you sincerely for the honour you have done me, and beg to assure you that it shall be my utmost endeavour to discharge the duties of my office faithfully.

Comment is almost unnecessary. It would have been a highly creditable ending of the affair if Provost Macneille had sacrificed the honour for a term, and, admitting the evident wish of the community, had himself nominated Mr Pollock to the Provostship; and if Mr M'Creadie for a time had sacrificed the Junior Bailieship and seconded the nomination. Both gentlemen would have been more honoured in this way than in receiving the undeserved honours given to them. On the other hand, as it was, while there may have been a litfle chagrin at the unexpected result the consolation was great. The disregard of the public wish told against the Macneille party, and, at all events, the honour of the fight remained with Mr Pollock and his friends, a reward more to be desired then than the snatching of a reward which was not intended for them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Introduction of Railways.

I do not suppose the municipal elections of half a century ago will be of so much interest that I need dwell further upon them. They are of interest now not so much on account of their personal nature, as to show how public interest was taken in public matters. As long as it was left in the hands of a few wire-pullers to guide the municipal coach, the great body of electors took little interest in public affairs, and little progress was made. Ayr remained dormant because there was no public spirit in its management, hence there was a twenty years' provostship, and in another case one for nine years. Two or three individuals had the whole power in their hands, and the quieter things were kept the better for them. Practically there was no local taxation, the revenue from the Common Good meeting as it did all the expenditure necessarily made that expenditure limited, and the fear of a municipal tax being imposed kept the public from crying out for improvements. The time was coming, however, when the Common Good and the old time-worn system of raising money by customs could not meet the public municipal expenditure. Improved sanitary arrangements became indispensable, and watching and cleansing became more necessary. Newton and Wallacetown, practically part of Ayr, yet not of it, were an anomaly, and an amalgamation became absolutely necessary for the benefit of all concerned. It was becoming more evident every day that Ayr must be a burgh comprising all parts of the town. For a long time as a parish Ayr had taken parochial rates of the whole harbour, though in point of fact the principal part of the harbour was in Newton Parish. This, after a fight, was adjusted, and as it became apparent that the increase of population was going on more rapidly in the north than in the south the necessity of amalgamation became apparent. If the municipal rulers at the time did not see it, the Town Clerk (Mr John Pollock) at least saw it, and by very judicious management it was carried out in 1873. That may be taken as the date of the commencement of the great progress Ayr is now making. Here was another fight for the Provostship in which the public took a real interest, and this time the wishes of the public were given effect to. The town was now divided into wards, thereby securing a better local representation.

Greater interest were taken in public affairs; the old parties were broken up, and with that the old wirepullers came to grief. The Burgh Surveyor, who formerly was to a great extent the Town Council, almost came to grief himself, as only by the narrowest majority he was retained in office. Provost Goudie was the first Provost of the amalgamated burgh, and during his three years' term of office many new works were inaugurated though not completed. A new Town Hall was commenced, and Ayr was fairly started as an up-to-date place, when another fight for the Provostship took place, and Provost Steele came into power. I am now, however, practically entering into what may be called modern history, and I must hark back to less recent times; and to make these reminiscences at all complete, I must devote some space to the introduction of railways, which has done so much to change the habits and customs of every community.

There is no doubt Ayr, like other places, has benefited much by the excellent railway accommodation which has been given to it. It would be difficult to realise now what we would do without it. Only a few years ago, during the railway strike, we could form some idea of it, because we were then put on a limited service, which was very inconvenient, but what it would be like by a total stoppage passes all comprehension. Yet the oldest inhabitants found life in their youth not only tolerable but even, they might say, comfortable. Though there were no railways, the old stage coaches and carriers proved ample for all requirements. Not being among the oldest inhabitants, my memory does not carry me so far back, but I well remember the time when there was no Dalmellington, Maybole, or Girvan Railway; when to get to Kilmarnock we had to go round by Dalry; when there were four trains a day going and coming to Glasgow, taking at least two hours each journey, and to Kilmarnock nearly as much; when to go to London was a very serious business, necessitating the making of your will before you left, and more commotion made on leave-taking than there would now be in going to America, or even further. It will be necessary here for the sake of connection, and make my narrative more complete, to give a brief account of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway and its connection with Auld Ayr, and trace its expansion down to the present day from its very limited start. Perhaps the most extraordinary thing connected with this progress is that it is only of late years that Ayr has prospered. For the first thirty years after the railways were introduced, that is between 1840 and 1870, very little progress was

made. Ayr remained stationary, and yet Ayrshire was the first county in Scotland where a railway was laid, the Ayrshire Railway, as it was at first called, being among the first complete lines in the kingdom, and certainly a most important one, connecting, as it did, Glasgow and Ayr. The first part of the railway made in Ayrshire was between the Duke of Portland's coalfields, near Kilmarnock, and the shipping port of Troon. The Act authorising its construction was entitled "An Act for making a railway from or near the town of Kilmarnock, in the County of Ayr, to a place called the Troon, in the said county—48 Geo. III., 1808." Aiton, in his survey of Ayrshire Agriculture, speaks of this railway, "of magnitude unequalled in Scotland"—being in course of formation while he wrote. It was made in order that coals from the Duke of Portland's estate might be cheaply and easily conveyed to the port of Troon, which was also formed by His Grace. The railway was traversed by waggons drawn by horses. It was used for the conveyance of passengers, and a trip on the tramcar from "Auld Killie" to Troon and back was, in summer, among the luxuries of the "saut water" season indulged in by the "Kilmarnock wabsters." This was, however, many years before the actual railway now the Glasgow and South-Western, was even seriously thought of. Canals were highly popular, and steamboat traffic was greatly on the increase, but only short railway lines were much thought of. To Glasgow merchants must be assigned the credit of promoting the first really extensive line between Glasgow and Ayr. Ayrshire and the West Coast presented an inviting area for a railway undertaking. The mineral fields in the northern part of Ayrshire were then being opened up, though their full value had not been comprehended. That county was the scene of many industries. Handloom weaving and sewing afforded employment to the men and women of all the villages and towns along the West Coast between Glasgow and Girvan. The coal trade with Ireland always increasing, kept the little ports of Ardrossan, Irvine, Troon, and Ayr busy; and the success of the Duke of Portland's tramroad, and the advantage of the railway in connection with Mr Gordon's coal pits in Newton and St Quivox, near Ayr, showed where an extension of traffic might be greatly promoted. The amenities and attractions of the villages on the Ayrshire coast as summer resorts began to present themselves to the Glasgow merchants, and the thought that they might lodge their families at the coast, and come and go daily to and from their business in Glasgow, enabled them to form pleasant prospects con-

nected with the railway. Ayrshire, moreover, was a rich agricultural county; the while the Glasgow shopkeepers saw that the line would be the means of keeping their markets well supplied with the various products of the farm —fresh, wholesome, and cheap, the farmers on their part were not slow to perceive that it would place at their doors, as it were, a splendid outlet for all their farms could yield. All parties were anxious for a railway, and only a little enterprise and exertion were necessary to set it agoing. This was all duly set forth, and to the action of a number of Glasgow merchants we are doubtless indebted for the existence, at such a comparatively early period as 1836, of the Ayrshire Railway.

As the prospectus then issued gives a clear idea of the opinions and principles by which the promoters of the concern were guided, we give it entire:—

"PROSPECTUS OF THE GLASGOW, PAISLEY, KILMARNOCK, AND AYR RAILWAY.

Capital, - £550,000 in 11,000 Shares of £50 each.

Deposit, £2 10s per Share.
No further call until an Act has been obtained.

Provisional Committee—

James M'Call, Esq., of Daldowie.
Geo. M. Nisbet, of Cairnhill.
Theodore Walrond, of Calderpark.
James Campbell.
Charles Tennant, of St. Rollox.
Alexander Fletcher.
Arch. Bogle, of Claremont.
Robert Montgomerie, of Craighouse.
John Miller.
Lachlan M'Kinnon.
Archibald Finnie, of Kilmarnock.

Bankers—

Glasgow, - - Glasgow and Western Bank.
Ayr, - - - Ayrshire Banking Coy.
Kilmarnock, - Ayr Bank.
Irvine, - - Ayr Bank.
Manchester, - - Jones, Lloyd, & Coy.
Liverpool, - - Moss & Coy.
Interim Secretary, - James Watson.

"The railway commences at Glasgow, and passes through or close to Paisley, Johnstone, Kilbarchan, Lochwinnoch, Beith, Dalry, Kilwinning, and the important manufacturing town of Kilmarnock, or connects all of these towns and districts surrounding them with the harbours of Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Irvine, Troon, and Ayr. The extreme length of the line between Glasgow and Ayr will be about thirty-eight miles, and between Glasgow and Kilmarnock thirty-three miles. From the high ridge which lies to the south of Glasgow a more direct line between these termini cannot be obtained.

"At the north end of this line will lie the county of Lanark (the Lancashire of Scotland), and the great commercial and manufacturing city of Glasgow, having a population of 230,000. By means of railways now in contemplation, it will be directly connected with the city of Edinburgh and the towns in the east and north of Scotland. Within six miles of its northern termination, and situated on the line, will be the manufacturing town of Paisley, having 50,000 inhabitants. Through the rest of its course it will intersect a densely populated country—the inhabitants of which are principally employed in factories; and at its southern extremity will lie the towns and harbours before mentioned (some of which are connected by subsidiary railways) and the county of Ayr, whose importance may be estimated from the fact that, although not of large surface it contains next to Aberdeen the most numerous rural population, and next to Perthshire the greatest number of county voters in Scotland.

"This line of railway has been surveyed by the most experienced railway engineers in Scotland, Messrs Grainger and Miller, and is delineated with its branches in the annexed map. The summit level of the main line at Kilbirnie Loch is only 95 feet above the level of the sea; comparatively little cutting or embankment will be required on it; and throughout its course no inclination will exceed 10 feet per mile.

"The landed proprietors along the line are understood to be favourable, and many of them have intimated their intention to take shares in and otherwise promote the undertaking. There is also a probability of an arrangement being entered into with the subscribers to the Glasgow and Greenock Railway for making joint terminations in Glasgow, whereby great expense will be saved to both companies. From this cause, the cost of the railway might reasonably be estimated at considerably under the average rate per mile. The coast line, more especially, will be

executed at small expense, as it runs on almost a perfect level along unenclosed downs of no value. To provide against contingencies, however, the engineers recommend that the capital be fixed at £550,000.

"The income to be derived from the railway will be obtained partly from the transference to it of the present traffic along the common roads, and by steamboats on the Firth of Clyde, which, from the circuit of the coast, take quadruple the time which would be required on a railway; partly from the natural increase in that traffic arising from the improved means of communication; and partly from the entirely new traffic which will be created. The existing traffic having been accurately ascertained, it has been found that, at railway prices, it would yield the following sums:—

I.—Passenger Traffic.

Present passengers, per coach, between Glasgow and Kilmarnock; Glasgow, Ardrossan, and Irvine; Glasgow and Ayr; and between intermediate distances in Ayrshire, ...	£16,091	6	6
Present steamboat passengers between Glasgow and Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Irvine, Ayr, Arran, and intermediate distances, ...	11,133	15	0
Present passengers between Glasgow, Paisley, and Johnstone, £16,526 8s. But suppose that one-fourth only of this traffic is transferred to this railway,	4,131	6	0
	£31,356	7	6
Add 100 per cent. for increase on present number of passengers, ...	31,356	7	6

II.—Goods Traffic.

Goods at present carried between Glasgow and Kilmarnock; Glasgow and Ayr; and intermediate distances in Ayrshire,	12,103	12	4
Goods at present carried by steamboats, &c., between Glasgow & Ardrossan; Troon, Irvine, Ayr, and intermediate distances along the coast, ...	3,179	0	0
Goods at present carried between Glasgow, Paisley, & Johnstone, calculated from			

the number of loaded carts passing along the road, ...	£6,734	0	0
But suppose that one-fourth only of this traffic is transferred to this railway,	1,683	10	0
Mails and packets, ...	720	0	0
	£80,398	17	4
Deduct for maintenance of railway, locomotive power, management and incidents, ...	26,799	12	5
Leaving as nett profit, ...	£53,509	4	11

Affording a dividend on the proposed capital of ten per cent.; exclusive of revenue obtained from the carriage of minerals and agricultural produce, and of profit arising from new traffic.

"But it must be obvious at a glance at the map, that if the proposed railways were formed, at least a very large proportion of the passengers going to and coming from Belfast, Newry, Londonderry, Dublin, Stranraer, Campbeltown, Holyhead, Isle-of-Man, Whitehaven, and Liverpool, in place of spending six hours in making a circuit of the Clyde, would cross over the country between Troon, Ardrossan, and Glasgow in little more than one hour per railway; and that a considerable quantity of light goods would also be shipped and landed at one or other of these ports, and new traffic to and from each end would thus be created.

"Again, the railway to the sea-coast of Ayrshire would enable sea-bathing visitors to reach it with certainty in one hour, in place of their spending, as at present, from five to eight hours in an uncertain and tedious voyage. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the sea-bathing quarters on the Ayrshire coast, which at present are considerable, would become still more fashionable resorts; and in this way traffic in the carriage of passengers along the line would also be created.

"Lastly, a gigantic undertaking has been for some time contemplated of a railway between Preston and Glasgow. The country between these points has been surveyed by Mr Locke, the eminent English engineer, who has published a report stating that the best line would be by Kilmarnock and Kilbirnie Loch. Between that town and Glasgow it would be identical with one branch of the line now proposed. The formation of the present railway may, therefore, be considered as part of, and as forwarding the execution of this great line, the remainder of which, with the

assistance of Government, and through the erections of noblemen, gentlemen, and influential bodies interested in its establishment, may be expected to be shortly completed. On its completion, it is scarcely possible to estimate the increase of revenue which would result from the carriage of light goods and passengers between the great manufacturing and commercial districts of Lancashire and Lanarkshire.

"With the above views, several gentlemen have associated themselves for the purpose of bringing before the public the plan for executing the railway delineated on the annexed plan, with such alterations as shall appear to the committee of management expedient. It is proposed that the shares shall be fixed at £50 each, of which a deposit of five per cent. shall be paid at subscription. No further call will be made, no liability incurred, until after an Act of Incorporation is obtained; and it is intended that the capital shall, therefore, be paid by instalments of £5, at intervals of not less than three months.

"Applications for shares to be made to James Watson, sharebroker, Frederick Street, Glasgow; John Robertson & Company, sharebrokers, Edinburgh; Hugh Miller, Ayr; Douglas & Hamilton, writers, Kilmarnock; Patrick Blair, writer, Irvine; Thomas Caldwell, sharebroker, Manchester; Richard Dawson, sharebroker, Liverpool."

This appeal to the public was well met. In a couple of days after it had been issued the promoters met, and were informed that application had been made for 4345 shares, and that these were allotted to the parties applying, provided they paid the deposit of £2 10s per share, and signed the Parliamentary Undertaking and Contract of Co-partnery before the first of May. Letters were also received from landed gentlemen, whose estates the line passed through or near, stating they would give the undertaking their hearty support.

In July, 1836, the prospects of the line were such that directors were appointed, the following gentlemen being chosen:—Mr M'Call of Daldowie, chairman; Messrs Hamilton of Rozelle; William Leckie Ewing, Glasgow; James Storrie, Glasgow; and Wm. Campbell of Netherplace. Other railways were projected in the district—among them being one from Kilmarnock to Ardrossan—and a good deal of the Secretary's time was employed in looking after these, for the purpose of having them embraced in the larger scheme of the Glasgow and Ayrshire Railway.

The troubles of the new Company were not yet over. The jealousy between Kilmarnock and Ayr had to be arranged. Far-seeing people also saw that a Glasgow and

Ayr Railway was not all that was required. Kilwinning and Ardrossan had to be connected, and opposition lines were threatened. Kilmarnock and Troon line had to be purchased, and an extension had also to be looked forward to going South. Dumfries and Carlisle had eventually to be reached, and to that centre lines to London, Manchester, and Liverpool had to converge. Notwithstanding serious opposition, however, the promoters of the Glasgow and Ayrshire Railway Company resolved to prosecute their scheme. Early in March, 1837, copies of their Bill were laid before the Directors. Mr Oswald, M.P., was asked to be chairman of the Parliamentary Committee who had charge of the Bill. Though favourable to the undertaking, he declined, but suggested Sir John Dunlop, M.P., who cheerfully undertook that duty. Lord James Stuart, member for the Ayr Burghs, and Mr Hastie, member for Paisley, also agreed to assist the passing of the measure. It is worthy of note that the Queen ascended the throne this year, so that the Glasgow, Paisley, Gilmarnock, and Ayr Railway Bill was among the earliest statutes to which the consent of our late Sovereign was given. Active steps were thus taken to proceed with the formation of the line. There were many difficulties to overcome, but these were all surmounted, and, as I have it from the official report, in July, 1839, the engineer intimated that he would be prepared, on an early day, to convey a party of the Directors and their friends along the line from Ayr to Irvine—that portion being nearly completed. The Directors agreed to go over the line with their friends on the 19th July. They did so, very much to their own pleasure and satisfaction, and greatly to the astonishment of the people of the district. Many remember the crowds which turned out in Ayr to witness the arrival and departure of the special train, and the event was the subject of general conversation. The first section between Ayr and Irvine was opened in August, 1839. The fares were, first class, 2s 6d; second class, 1s 6d; third class, 1s. Trains left the town of Ayr at 8, 12, and 4 o'clock; Irvine at 9.30, 2, and 7.30. They were taken to Irvine, and from there the old stage coaches conveyed passengers to Glasgow. The whole distance between Ayr and Glasgow was completed, however, in August, 1840, the various sections having been completed to Troon in July, 1838; Kilwinning, March, 1840; Beith and Paisley, July, 1840; and Paisley and Howwood from the other end in August, 1840. The opening, on the 11th August, was a day of great rejoicing along the line. Two large sheds, part of the station at Ayr, had been tastefully fitted up as

pavilions, where a most sumptuous entertainment was furnished to a company of 450, embracing directors, shareholders and invited friends—including a fair sprinkling of ladies. The train from Glasgow reached Ayr at a quarter to 4 p.m., and, on its arrival, the spectacle at the station was most imposing. The local directors, the managers, and indeed all connected with the works, in the enthusiasm which an event so gratifying to the feelings of all in the West country was well calculated to excite, had for several days and nights previously been exerting themselves—in regard to the fitting up of the pavilions, the decorations of the station, and the general arrangements—in order to give a reception to the gay assemblage of visitors from the Western Metropolis, suitable to the originators and chief promoters of the undertaking, the first of its class in Scotland, and promising so much for every interest in Ayrshire. Seldom has there been seen in Ayr a scene more truly animating. The Union Jack flaunted from Wallace Tower—the town bells were ringing—the Kilwinning band was playing "Ayrshire Lassies" with exquisite taste and effect—banners of every size and hue streamed from at least a dozen heights about the station—a splendid arch of evergreens, mixed with beautiful plants and flowers, suspended from the Railway Arms, and surmounted by a floral crown, was thrown across the approach—the walls on both sides of the line, as far as the eye could reach, were crowded with spectators—every eminence of the vicinity was clad with men, women, and children—and on the arrival of the long train of glittering carriages, with their gaily attired inmates, seldom has there been heard such a loud and long-continued peal of welcome as issued from the joyous multitude. This was one of Ayr's Red Letter days. The good people of the Auld Toun had got their main desire, a smart access to Glasgow, and any further advantage Glasgow could derive from railways Ayr was sure to come in for a share of them. Any extension southward Ayr would participate in at Kilmarnock. Having now given a full narrative of the introduction of the railway into Ayr, I need not extend it further with a complete history of the whole South-Western system. Only the influence it had on Ayr, the changes it has brought about, and the part taken in them by our local celebrities, will form some further chapters in these Reminiscences.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Influence of Railway.

The lengthy notice I have given of the formation of the railway from Glasgow to Ayr is only excusable from the fact of the very great importance it has had on the prosperity of various places on the Ayrshire coast. Ayr may be considered to have been highly favoured by the enterprise of the Glasgow merchants who were the main promoters of the line, for to them is due the erection of the railway to Ayr so early in railway history. Many places of even more importance were left out for many years afterwards, and the Ayrshire Railway formed the nucleus of the great railway which now dominates the counties of Ayr, Dumfries, Lanark, Renfrew, and Galloway, known as the Glasgow and South-Western Railway. The railway to Ayr was completed long before Greenock or Dumfries had a railway connection, and for many years Ayr was looked upon as a terminus, and all communication southwards through Carrick onward to Wigtownshire was by coach, carrier, or steamer. It is somewhat singular that though for many years this was the case, Ayr as the terminus did not make the progress which might have been expected from the favourable position in which it was placed. I have heard it urged in the fifties and sixties of last century that it would be a sad blow to Ayr to be converted into a way-side station. The old railway station was situated at the north end of the New Bridge, and though lately it was considered quite inadequate for the accommodation required for a goods station, in the fifties it was found ample for passengers, goods and minerals, and quite fitted to be a permanent terminus of a great line. The merchants in New Bridge Street, Sandgate, and High Street at the time strongly maintained that to extend the railway further would simply be to ruin Ayr. The Maybole and Girvan coaches started from New Bridge-end daily, about ten o'clock, on the arrival of the Glasgow morning train. For a time one coach was sufficient, and, having the whole traffic, was no doubt fairly remunerative to its proprietor, Mr M'Murtrie, who then had the great posting business in Ayr. In a few years, however, a rival coach was started, and possibly both received sufficient support to be considered paying concerns, but one wonders now at the extent of our traffic which requires half-a-dozen trains daily both ways conveying passengers at least a hundred fold in number, and goods which all the carts in the district

now could scarcely overtake. Then again, the Dalmellington traffic which now requires numerous passenger and goods trains daily, was overtaken then by the Newton carters. Early in the morning numerous carts were started about four and five in the morning, conveying lime or iron ore to the Dalmellington Iron Company, returning in the evening with a load of pig iron. Forbes MacKenzie at that time was unknown. The late Mr Georgeson's old licensed premises in High Street, now occupied by Mr Steen, were opened every morning at four o'clock, and the morning dram was then taken by all the carters. I have known a row of carts, extending from near the Wallace Tower to the Winton Buildings, standing here for a time, all loadened. The horses had their nose bags attached finishing their morning feed, while the drivers were in getting their "morning" to cool them in summer, or in winter to warm them for their twelve miles' journey. Such diligence in business on the part of Mr Georgeson fully merited the comfortable competence he acquired during the long time he was in business, and fully justified the title of "Whisky Ha'," the name given to the residence he built for himself in Dalblair Road. It was fairly earned, for the Newton carters were not a body of men who would take inferior stuff or small measure at a high price, and it must be remembered that twopence and threepence had to go as far in those days as sixpence or even more can go now; no half glasses of which there were half-a-dozen in the gill; the smallest measure was a half-gill, and it was a real half-gill. Probably in the early morning nothing less than a full gill was taken. But what of that, with whisky then about 6s 6d per gallon, whereas now it is three times more. Yet, we are told, that in these degenerate days, with shorter drinking hours, liquor three times dearer, and half of the population total abstainers, more drink than ever is consumed. A further cause for wonderment is that many of those who are called regular drinkers now would get damaged by taking a quantity which would not have turned a hair in the topers of old. These carters of pig iron seemed to have had iron throats as well, and they did not require any water to dilute their whisky—the usual drink then being a gill of whisky neat and a tumbler of strong beer sent after it, just to modify its effect on the stomach, if, indeed, carters could be supposed to have stomachs. The Girvan and Stranraer traffic was conducted, in addition to the Girvan coaches, by steamers at least once a week, so there was no wonder that the merchants of Ayr looked with somewhat unfriendly eyes on railways being extended south of Ayr, virtually taking all this traffic

past their doors. The usual belief was that, as railways increased, the need for horses would become very much less; how this idea has been falsified is generally very well known.

The Glasgow and Ayrshire Railway did not remain very long the limited concern which it was when its promoters started it. The main object of the directors of the Company after its erection to Ayr was to form what is now the main line of the Company, from Glasgow to Carlisle.

From 1840, when the Ayrshire Railway was opened from Glasgow to Ayr, till 1844, the time and attention of the Directors of the Ayrshire Railway Company were chiefly directed to the completion of their plans for the comprehension in their railway net-work of the counties of Renfrew and Ayr. The old primitive railway from Kilmarnock to Troon was acquired on long lease, and required renovation; branch lines were projected to Troon, Irvine, and Ardrossan Harbours; and the line from Dalry to Kilmarnock was pushed forward to completion. They were much concerned, and were most anxious, however, about the extension of the line southwards in the direction of Nithsdale. In promoting this undertaking they had to encounter the determined hostility of the Directors of the Caledonian Railway Company. By the individual action of members of the Ayrshire Board, and the public spirit of the Glasgow merchants, the Ayrshire Directorate was relieved of a great deal of responsibility on the subject, though they had had a foretaste of a rather troublesome business. This arose from the Duke of Buccleuch being afraid that the grounds around Drumlanrig Castle—his seat near Thornhill, in Nithsdale—would be intruded on, and their amenity impaired by the railway. At the meeting referred to, Mr Miller, who seems at once to have been appointed engineer of the line, was instructed to survey the line in the neighbourhood of Drumlanrig, and to ascertain how far from the castle, and in what way it could be carried, so as to remove His Grace's apprehension of injury to his estate. In the early plan of the line it is marked as following the course of the Nith more nearly than it does now, and as passing close to the village of Thornhill. Notwithstanding the readiness displayed by the promoters of the line to comply with the wishes of the Duke of Buccleuch, they received much opposition. Great delay was caused, and for a long time the chairman of the committee, and latterly the chairman of the directors of the Carlisle Railway Company, were in constant correspondence with His Grace and his agents. It is due to the

opposition then met with that the line has been carried along the north side of the valley of the Nith, high up on the sides of the hills, and through a long tunnel

The communications the committee had with the other proprietors on the line were of a different character. The Marquis of Bute, Lord James Smart, and Sir D. H. Blair, were most anxious the line should be proceeded with, and gave its promoters every encouragement; and several Dumfries proprietors allowed their names to be added to the Provisional Committee. The Ayrshire Company agreed to take £20,000 of stock in the new line, and it was arranged that each member of the Provisional Committee should take £1000 worth. Resolutions in favour of it were passed at the county meetings in Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. Meetings were also held in the large English towns, at which resolutions in favour of the line were approved of and adpoted. Dumfries and Annan were keen for the line.

After many negotiations, the promoters of the Glasgow and Carlisle Railway resolved to go on with their undertaking, and in the beginning of 1845 they agreed to empower the Ayrshire Railway Company to make the portion of the line from Kilmarnock to Cumnock; in consideration of which the Ayrshire Company was to take five miles from the length of the line in calculating the rates of charges for goods and passangers passing along the Dumfries line to and from Glasgow, and to concede other favours. In March of the same year a general meeting of the subscribers was held in Glasgow, at which the advantages of the new line were put forward in the strongest possible manner; and it was resolved that, having considered the report, the meeting, feeling impressed with the superiority of the line, not only on national grounds, but as to a line fitted to accomodate the important populous districts of the south and south-west of Scotland, were of opinion that the committee should proceed vigorously with the Bill for the railway; and they renewed the powers of the committee to take such steps as they might consider most advisable for the interest of the Company. A motion that the Company be dissolved was ruled incompetent, but a large unmber of the subscribers entered their dissent.

In the beginning of 1846, the Directors of the Ayrshire Railway Company came before their shareholders with a full budget of proposals. They spoke of a new line from Paisley to Busby for the purpose of shortening the distance between Paisley and Kilmarnock. They also discussed the merits of the line from Kilmarnock to Strathaven—a distance of 18 miles—but merely proposed a branch to

Galston and Newmilns. Another extension projected was through the mineral fields near Muirkirk to Carnwath, leaving the main line near Ayr, and having branch lines to Catrine, Lugar, Garallan, &c. The applications to Parliament were for the powers to take up or form lines from Paisley to Hurlet and Barrhead; Ayrshire and Bridge of Weir, and Port-Glasgow Junction; Hamilton and Strathaven; Glasgow and Belfast Union; and Glasgow, Dumfries, and Carlisle. Many of these schemes received the sanction of Parliament, including the Belfast Union Line, and the Glasgow, Dumfries, and Carlisle Line, and at the close of 1846 the contracts for the extension of the Ayrshire main line from Kilmarnock to Cumnock were nearly all let.

I find it necessary to give this history of the Company from a sure source to bring out the principle characteristics of the middle of the nineteenth century. It explains also much that has taken place in connection with several matters which have interested the community since that time.

A Bill for the formation of the Glasgow, Dumfries, and Carlisle Railway was not obtained by its promoters without a severe struggle. They were strongly opposed by the Directors of the Caledonian Railway, who contended that the new line would divert traffic on which the promoters of the Caledonian Railway had calculated.

Immediately upon the passing of the Act in 1847, steps were taken to give effect to its provisions. The engineer, Mr Miller, was instructed to prepare working plans; and applications were made to the landholders along the route for their assistance and co-operation. That same year, the portion of the line between Dumfries and Gretna was let, and the contractors were held bound to have it ready for opening in March, 1848. The Dunlanrig Tunnel, a most difficult undertaking, was also let.

In the midst of the proceedings necessary to inaugurate the construction of the line, the Directors had ever to keep a sharp out-look on the doings of the Directors of the Caledonian Company. The Companies were in a state of open war. An invasion of the province of the Dumfries and Carlisle line was threatened; all attempts to come to a good understanding with the Caledonian directors proved futile, and the Ayrshire and Glasgow and Carlisle Directors had to make new arrangements to counteract the opposition. A most important measure, which they were successful in having passed, was one for carrying into effect an arrangement between the Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock, and Ayr

Company and the Glasgow, Dumfries, and Carlisle Company for the immediate amalgamation of the two companies. This measure was carried without opposition, and others previously passed, which it affected, were repealed.

In the autumn of 1847, the arrangements necessary under the Amalgamation Bill were confirmed by the two companies, and practically they then became one corporation. The same Board of Directors served both, and carried on the business of each. Mr Logie, who had acted as secretary of the Glasgow, Dumfries, and Carlisle Company, resigned, and his duty devolved on Mr J. F. Smith, then secretary of the Ayrshire Company. The Directors at the same time were considerably relieved by an arrangement having been come to with the Directors of the Caledonian Company that they would neither of them apply to Parliament for any branches or extensions affecting the interests of either Company. This left each Board comparatively free to promote its own affairs, and enabled the Directors of the Carlisle Company to devote their attention to the progress of the works on the line, and the settling of the claims of landlords and tenants for ground taken. The latter were often very troublesome, and caused much delay, but the difficulties were overcome, even the claim of the Duke of Buccleuch. The Duke did not wish the repose of his favourite residence disturbed by the shrill engine whistle, and his park separated by the intervention of railway property, but finding his tenantry, and the inhabitants of the whole district, in favour of the railway, His Grace had yielded to a sense of public duty, and gave them his cordial support.

Great commercial depression prevailed in the winter of 1847-8, but at the February meeting of the shareholders in the latter year, the Directors were able to state that the call on the shares made in August had been well responded to. They urged the shareholders to support them in devoting their energies to the completion of the whole line. Troubles, however, began to strike around them. The commercial depression continued, and money became scarce. At mid-summer they were in such straits that they resolved to stop the whole of the works to the north of Dumfries till the line to the south of that town was completed. Messrs Brown & Oliver, contractors, got into difficulties, which gave the Directors a great deal of additional work and trouble. The labourers on the line were for weeks without pay, and they roamed about annoying the farmers, and causing disturbances in the district. Amid these troubles, the southern section of the line was pushed for-

ward, and the section from Dumfries to Annan and Gretna was opened on the 23rd August. In terms of the agreement with the Ayrshire Company, it was wrought by its officials. The Company received all the receipts, and the shareholders of the Carlisle Company 5 per cent. interest till the amalgamation took place. At a special meeting held in August, 1848, the Directors were empowered to borrow about £500,000, but their efforts to do so appear to have met with but indifferent success, for in November the secretary informed the Board that he had been without funds to meet the payments of the Company's service for several days. It was resolved to call upon the Ayrshire Company, in term of their agreement, to supply funds "to save the Carlisle Company from insolvency." The works on the line were again almost completely suspended, and payments were authorised to be made "as soon as the necessary funds could be collected." Strong appeals for assistance were made to the Ayrshire Company, and in January, 1849, the Directors signed a cheque on the Union Bank for £114, "being all the funds at the disposal of the Directors at that date." Sir A. Orr, was chairman when the Companies became united in the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company. With the return of the spring of 1849, the revival of the Company's affairs became manifest. The Directors, at the half-yearly meeting in February, reported that the traffic on the Dumfries section had been satisfactory, though the prevalence of cholera in the Queen of the South had interfered with the passenger traffic. A more interesting statement they made was that, in consequence of the necessary amount of capital having been paid up, they were in a position to raise money on mortgage, and they anticipated ample means to enable them to complete the works. These explanations were realised; and, in April, money having come in, the works of the Dumlanrig Tunnel, and other portions of the line, were resumed. Contractors were sought to undertake new works; and in looking out for them it was a matter of peculiar moment that they should be prepared to accept payment in the Company's debentures, repayable in three years. After this, the works seem to have been carried on more steadily; and on the 21st October, 1850, the line was opened throughout. At the last meeting of the Directors of the Carlisle Company, it was agreed that the books should be balanced till the 31st October, and a new set of books opened for the Glasgow and South-Western Railway. Similar resolutions were adopted at the Ayrshire Railway Board, and thus the two Companies merged in the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company.

CHAPTER XXV.

Railway Management.

I have shown how the railway to Ayr was first promoted. The comparatively small beginning it had was only what might have been expected at so early a date in the history of railways, it being among the first in Scotland. It has had a continuous growth ever since, successfully developing the district it serves, till now it is one of the most important, best managed, and best paying concerns in the kingdom. There may have been some luck in the management, but there must have been "guid guiding" also. If its progress has not been by leaps and bounds, it has always been sure, and it has escaped the great ups and downs which have attended almost every other company. No very great disaster has befallen it. Accidents certainly have happened, which are inseparable from all such concerns, but its progress has always been steady; and though the district it serves is fairly well attended to, there are yet openings, and the history of the Company in the past indicates to a certainty that continuous progress is yet to be made. The harbours on the West Coast are gradually falling into the Company's hands, as they naturally should be. Their own fleet of steamers, in addition to others, give daily travelling facilities. The South-West of Scotland includes more than Ayrshire and the adjoining counties, for the islands adjacent must be included with the district served, and a connection with Ireland is just as necessary as is the Carlisle line of railway to connect us with England. From the very small beginning of the line from Glasgow to Ayr as it was sixty years ago, extensions have gone on in every case with great success. To some extent we are indebted to an energetic directorate. There were always good chairmen over the Board of Directors. From 1850 to 1880 Sir Andrew Orr and Sir James Lumsden were Chairmen. Both were engaged in the paper trade. They were energetic business men, in whose hands progress went on uninterruptedly. They were succeeded by Sir Peter Clouston, Sir Matthew W. Thomson, Sir Renny Watson, and now by Mr P. T. Caird, all admirable Chairmen, whose names attached to any business concern gave it a sense of security, which to some extent secured its success. With all due respect to these Chairmen, however, excellent in every respect though they have all been, it must be admitted that the success of the Company, its whole progress from 1841 to the present day, has been more due to

its General Managers and Officials than to any Board of Directors. The Directors certainly found the money for the undertaking, and an energetic Chairman is of immense importance to the success of any Company, but without a manager who knows the whole working of the concern, and with assistants who can carry out the details of the different departments, even a vigorous directorate would not be an assured success. The Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company have, however, from the commencement been singularly successful in the selection of their general managers. Mr Johnstone, who was manager from 1841 to 1875, built up the line; and his successors in office, who have all served under him in different departments, have been equally successful in developing the undertaking. The terms of service of the successive general managers since the Company was formed have been as follows:—Wm. Johnstone, from January, 1841, to January, 1875; William J. Wainwright, from January, 1875, to September, 1886; John Morton, from October, 1886, to July, 1892; Thomas Brunton, from July, 1892, to March, 1894; and David Cooper, from March, 1894. It will be seen that the present general manager will shortly have held office for a period next in length to that of the first general manager, and, being still in the prime of life, bids fair, judging from all appearance, to run as prolonged and as prosperous a career. I have no desire to draw any comparison; it would, indeed, be unfair to both gentlemen to do so. Times and circumstances have changed much, and both general managers seem to have caught the spirit of the times and secured success in both cases. From the first, however, the Company has been making steady progress. There never has been a year in which some step forward has not been taken. There never has been a time at which any general manager could or did say to his directors, "Rest and be thankful." They have always had reason to be thankful, but "rest" is a principle unknown in railway management, and the Engineer's office is always kept busy, not only with maintenance and repairs, but with extensions going forward. Even at present, when everything seems quiet and the promotion of new railway Bills seems to be a thing of the past, quite as much progress is being made as ever. Within the next two years there will be added to the railway system as large additions as have been made since its establishment in 1841. The management of the Company has been continuous. The present general manager—Mr Cooper—commenced his career under the first general manager, Mr Johnstone. Probably he could not have had a better start, and in the different steps

he has taken in the Company's service, every step forward was fully justified by its result, yet I daresay he will be the first to join in deserved praise of the general manager who worked up the South-Western system so successfully for the first thirty-four years of its existence. It is not yet thirty years since the first manager retired from the full management of the concern, and many still remember his rule. It is only fair to state that times have altered since; and without imputing blame, it has to be admitted that the relations of the Company and the community were not always of the happiest—certainly not such as they are now. Railways in their infancy had much to contend with which they have not to face at the present day. The success of any company was not assured, and in many cases much money was lost. New schemes were entered upon, all very promisingly, but they did not turn out nearly so well as expected. The general manager of any company had not the certainty of results which we have now. The public also expected too much. Concessions then were misunderstood. Anything which had the semblance of liberality was looked on as an indication of weakness and was followed by a demand for more. With every desire then to meet the wishes of a public ever craving, with or without reason for concession after concession, Mr Johnstone would doubtless have been a much happier man had a number of those who were continually crying out for concessions been possessed of a few shares in the company. What a change it would have made? The trader who grumbled because he had to pay twopence halfpenny a ton extra on his merchandise is always a more unreasonable man than a shareholder, even though also a trader. He is reasonable, and willingly pays his twopence halfpenny, knowing that the small extra charge is comparatively nothing on the ton but a mighty sum on hundreds of thousands of tons, which go to swell the dividend and give a due return on his investment as a shareholder. Another drawback to the management of the railway was perhaps even more than the charge of supposed excessive rates. The officials of the company—the subordinates—stationmasters, goods agents, clerks, guards, engine drivers, porters, etc., were all men of importance. These offices were comparatively new. Those who held these appointments derived them from a source independent of the public, and elated by position and an assumed superiority to those whom they thought not so fortunate as themselves, were arrogant, lordly in fact, and would not be found fault with. They were their own masters, as far as the public were concerned,

and treated the public with some little contempt. Complaints were treated as pertaining to insolence, and it has to be confessed that public opinion was always ready to side with the grievance mongers, who were always condemning the Railway Company and its management for extortional rates, incompetence, bad management, and all the evils attending a concern which many were fostering the idea was a natural enemy to all commerce. Mr Johnstone had to contend with all this. High rates, irregular deliveries, a staff probably not sufficient to cope with the work, and not trained to meet the steady demand going on, could neither meet the wishes of the general manager nor satisfy the whole community. Certainly any supposed overcharge or irregularity was complained of first to Mr Dickie, the then goods manager. He was the natural enemy of the traders. He had to make the most of his department, and too often it was put to him either to carry the goods for nothing, or be blamed for extortionate charges. In many cases the general manager did grant some redress. Every serious case came to him, which was attended to; but minor cases, as well as railway extortion, not worthy of notice, were laid to his charge. During his thirty-five years' rule his tact, urbanity, and sound judgment worked a wonderful change and removed much of the discontent, and he left his successor, Mr Wainwright, a much more easy place to fill. Under his management the Company completed not only the whole of the original line from Glasgow to Ayr, and to Carlisle, but branches to Ardrossan, Maybole, Girvan, Kirkcudbright, and Greenock. I question much if any general manager of any company had ever so much work to carry out and so many different and difficult schemes to negotiate, and did it so successfully. So many questions arose demanding the most judicious diplomacy that it would have taxed the efforts of any one to give anything like satisfaction to the numerous contending parties who required or demanded satisfaction. This was all the more difficult in the various districts where discontent was the normal state of matters. I remember well the furore in Ayr, as one illustration of fault-finding, regarding the removal of the Railway Station from the end of the New Bridge to the head of the town. No doubt at that time the centre of the town might be considered to be not very far from the Town Buildings, and as a central station (what is now the Goods Station) served Ayr, Newton, and Wallacetown fairly well, but the through line to Maybole, Girvan, and Dalmellington required accommodation. Besides space was limited, and it was awkward

for passengers to be run into the station at the New Bridge of Ayr, then shunted back to Falkland Junction, and from there to a station at the head of Kyle Street. The merchants of New Bridge Street, Sandgate Street, and High Street saw trade go past their doors by the removal of the station, and Newton people were indignant, for it did not enter into their minds then that another station would be granted at Tam's Brig; so the "heatner was on fire." It required little to arouse feeling against the Railway Company, and an indignation meeting was held at which the policy of the Company in removing the station was vigorously denounced.

It may not be altogether a matter of ancient history to mention that at that time there was no club in Ayr, no social meeting place for originating public business. Political and social clubs were unknown. There was a reading room in the Town's Buildings (the apartments now used as the Town Clerk's rooms) where the merchants and bigwigs of Ayr who could subscribe a guinea per annum congregated, but this was the only thing in the shape of a club, and to it might be added what was practically an adjunct to it, the tobacco shop opposite (Ferguson, 26 New Bridge Street), a jolly smoking club, where all the news, scandal and politics of the day were discussed every evening with as much relish as at any of the clubs of the present day. I will return to the celebrities who met here regularly, in some future chapter; suffice it to say there was not much diversity of opinion among them. They were the same in politics; at least those who differed were very discreet and never offered any opposition, but as to the removal of the railway station there was a unanimity of opinion which spoke volumes for the feeling against the Railway Company. The indignation, or rather opposition, meeting was engineered here! circulars were drawn out for speakers, bills concocted to draw the crowd, and all the strings pulled to make a successful meeting. Mr Buchanan, editor of the "Observer," was principal wire-puller, and concocted the motions which had to be proposed and seconded at the meeting; and with a preparatory leader in the "Observer" before it, the meeting doubtless was a success. Only in one thing was there failure, and that not the least important. The station was removed in spite of an awful flow of eloquence and indignation. Mr Johnstone, the general manager, was, of course, a prominent feature among those who were fixed on as the authors of the outrageous proposals. He survived it, and the station was shifted, and I think several of those who were the

warmest supporters of the indignation meeting lived to change their mind and think the change even a blessing in disguise. The feeling, however, continued long, fostered as it was by many traders, who contended that rates were extortionate, and consequently all they could do against the railway was quite justifiable. I am not aware of any friendly conference having been asked by those feeling aggrieved to have rates considered. It seemed to be taken for granted that no concession was possible, and grumbling was their only resource. It was in 1857, I think, when matters came to a crisis, when the Caledonian Company threatened an invasion of the Glasgow and South-Western territory. The proposal was to construct a line of railway from Ayr to Douglas via Mauchline, and then connect with the Caledonian system, giving a direct route from Ayr to Edinburgh. Something approaching unanimity was actually to be found in Ayr for once. Those who were always opposed to the South-Western Company had now an opportunity of gratifying their spleen, and the great body of the community joined in, I may say, naturally, for was it not an opposition railway, and opposition, it was glibly alleged, was the life of trade, and there were numerous reasons given why the line should be warmly supported. I think one of the most enthusiastic meetings ever held in Ayr was the result. Sir James Fergusson, the popular M.P. for the County, was in the chair, and was warmly supported by every one of influence both in county and burgh. Mr Johnstone, however, was not idle. He met the opposition by a counter move. He also promoted lines, of which the Ayr and Mauchline, and Ayr and Cumnock, via Ochiltree, branches are the result. These took away some of the supporters of the Ayr and Douglas line, and the Town Council and other bodies were approached in order to have the competing lines compared. Still the feeling was strongly anti-South-Western, and it will perhaps explain matters and the attitude of many if I give an extract from the "Ayr Observer" of that time, which may also mark and illustrate the change which has come over many since then. The Town Council had been approached to ask their consideration of the South-Western plans along with those of the Ayr and Douglas Company, but being on the eve of a November Election, it was carried that the new Council was to decide the matter. The following extract from the "Observer" fairly illustrates the position many took up:—"What further information or new light or fuller explanations can the Council desire to have on the subject? They know the wishes of the people

of Ayr, and that should be enough for them. They know, too, the grounds of these wishes, and why they were excited first; and, as intelligent citizens, having the good of the town at heart, they must surely know these grounds are perfectly good and adequate. They have lived in Ayr for many years, if not for all their lives, and must be well aware what Ayr owes to the Glasgow and South-Western, and how much confidence we ought to place in their tender mercies. That Company have had Ayrshire at their command for 20 years, and they have made their passenger fares and their goods rates so heavy as to be almost unbearable. The community has found them the reverse of anxious to consult its interest, and often prone to sink consideration of that in deference to the interests of these. Surely we have, and our wise Councillors have had long enough experience of the regime of the South-Western to be convinced that it is not desirable to be more or longer at that Company's mercy. Lately indeed there has been a tendency to pay more deference to the public interests—but why is that? Can anybody doubt that it is simply and solely owing to the fear of competition? And were that fear withdrawn, were the inhabitants of Ayr, after getting a taste of the advantages to be derived from competing railways, to be hurled back again under the regime of the South-Western without hope of ever again having an opportunity of getting the advantages which seemed so near—does any one doubt that the South-Western would resume their old despotic sway with redoubled energy? And if this should happen through the indifference of the inhabitants of Ayr and the remissness of their Town Council, their last state which would be worse than their first, would be the just reward of their carelessness. . . . . All the world knows that monopolists tend to be tyrannical, and we only wish to see the Glasgow and South-Western Co. relieved from the temptation which the possession of a monopoly throws in their way to take advantage of their power. Were the Ayr and Douglas line formed, they would certainly learn to be more attentive and obliging in their general dealings and less prone to saddle heavy charges on the public. For they would be forced to these improvements in self-defence. What the South-Western has not done for Ayr Harbour is quite enough in itself, were there no other proof, to show the need for competition. By their table of rates they virtually offer a premium on goods directed away from Ayr Harbour to the Harbour of Ardrossan. Surely then the Town Council needs no longer experience of this Company to demonstrate that their sole

supremacy in the county is a public evil. Yet the Council delay considering a scheme which, if successful, would destroy the monopoly, introduce a system of healthy competition, reduce passengers' fares and traffic rates, besides opening a direct route and outlet for the large mineral districts in the east of the county to the east coast of Scotland. They do this waiting until they see the plans of a line which, whatever its merits, will saddle the South-Western upon the whole of Ayrshire, give them a perpetual monopoly, and by for ever excluding the chance of competition, give them the opportunity of dealing with the county as they please, and we know from past experience how that will be. Such culpable apathy, such palpable neglect of the interests of the town and county, and such indifference to what the county must regard as a calamity—for the continuance of a South-Western monopoly read in the light of experience is nothing else—on the part of Councillors deserves, and we hope will receive, the attention of the electors. Let the electors decline to return any candidate who will not use his influence to forward the Ayr and Douglas line, and they will discharge a public duty."

Other local papers took up the same line, and it seemed hard times were in store for the South-Western. The enemy was rejoicing; the General Manager was undoubtedly the delinquent, and as far as Ayr and Ayrshire was concerned he was in a tight corner. The opposition was strong, but Mr Johnstone was stronger, and the indignation evaporated. The Caledonian measure was withdrawn, their supporters sold, and the Glasgow and South-Western scheme was carried; even Sir James Fergusson was so disgusted with the conduct of the Caledonian Company that he resigned his directorship then, and was soon after adopted by the South-Western, and from that time to this a Caledonian opposition has been looked upon as impossible if not undesirable. On two or three occasions since then Caledonian opposition has been spoken of, but in each case the community have discovered they have been led on to a certain point and then abandoned; and possibly in return for some labour in dragging a red herring across the track they have been remunerated by a concession in another quarter, and Ayr has been left to the enjoyment of a monopoly said to be detrimental to their interests, but which after all has not been felt. In no way yet can it be said that Ayr suffers from the want of a competing line. Kilmarnock, Dumfries, Irvine, Ardrossan, and several other places have competing lines, and the traffic is divided, but it must be borne in mind that the cost of two systems has

to be paid for, and no doubt is so, that it cannot be by a double expense incurred, and the revenue halved that reduced rates can be had. Just now the South-Western have, it is true, an monopoly; in return we have the best possible service, rates better and in no case worse than where competing lines are in existence, and we have facilities in no way inferior to any place similarly suited. At all events, the feeling now between the Railway and the community is very, very different to what it was fifty years ago.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Progress.

How much better off are we than were our predecessors of 50 or 60 years ago? is the suggestion which will naturally occur to any who have taken the trouble to read these reminiscences. In everything there has been much change. Rip Van Winkle, when he awoke after his sleep of 30 years, found such a change that it seemed inconceivable to him that the place of his nativity was the same, and 50 years' time, being a greater stretch, makes the change in Ayr all the more extraordinary. Yet, after all, from the glimpses I have given of Ayr as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century, we have not to go so far beneath the surface to find the same "Auld Ayr." In my previous chapter I have given an account of the social customs, the educational institutions, the kirks and clergymen, the magistrates and local authorities, and latterly the railways (then in their infancy comparatively)—all pointing to a comparison. There has been a growth, not an entire change, and one has almost to perpetrate an Irishism and say, "It is all the same, only quite different." The writer himself feels somewhat "the same only quite different." The fire and ambition of youth still remain, but very much altered. Views are doubtless changed, or perhaps only mellowed or toned down in some respects, accompanied with a consciousness that what was at one time possible is now rather past looking for, while at the same time many "castles in the air" have become erections greater than was ever contemplated. It is the same with many other things. Socially, Ayr is very much what it was, but in a different way; I think it is greatly improved, but others say no. We are certainly much more cultured; many say, however, not to our advantage. We live much better; many contend not giving much betterness to our health or happiness. We certainly live much more expensively, but do we get more value for the extra outlay, or are we healthier or happier? There are, however, people who will persist in looking on the black side of things; they are very strong in their opinions—quite honestly, too, I believe—but they are not necessarily always right, and they will contend that our progress has been in a retrograde way. It is a pity we should spend so much money on what some call a drawback. We pay more for our living.

In humble life, and even a grade or two above it, "Auld Scotia's humble fare," oatmeal porridge and oatmeal cakes and scones have long ceased to be the staple food. The swing of the pendulum from the old fare to the new fare has been much too great. There was too much porridge at one time, now there is far too little. There are, however, indications of the pendulum taking a backward swing. Oatmeal is coming in again, even in higher circles, as an article of diet, and nothing gives anything a better hold than making it fashionable. In the best hotels now porridge is presented and relished as part of a decent breakfast. This is just the position it ought to occupy. Porridge should be part of a breakfast, not the whole of it, and if this become general we shall be healthier, and our breakfasts will be more enjoyable and economical. In this way 50 years ago and the present time will become more alike. There are other articles of diet far too numerous to mention, which I need not specially allude to, pointing out the great difference of our mode of living then compared with the present day. I have said we live expensively—this is taken to mean extravagantly—but after all the expense is not our fault. In a sense we were extravagant 60 years ago. In the matter of fish I wont repeat the story told a thousand times of the stipulation not to have salmon too often, but in reality such were the tastes in the days of my youth. We wasted then what are now considered luxuries. We, for instance, would not taste an eel. Flounders were scorned; who would not eat a flounder? (the modern name of "plaice" was not known then); whitings and haddocks were 6d per stone, not 6d per lb. as at present; herrings could often be had at 1s per hunderd, at least 1s 6d was a fair price, and hundreds were taken home, cured, and enjoyed quite as much as now, when they cost ten times more; butcher meat of the best quality being had from 4d to 6d per lb.; butter and cheese, notwithstanding all the vaunted agricultural progress, were quite as good then as now—candidly, I think better—and yet not half the price. The increased prices account for much of the so-called extravagance of the present day, our cost of living be so much higher. Perhaps I should put it this way—money has not the same purchasing power; one pound note does not go so far as a half-sovereign did formerly. Then, as now, our drinking customs bulked largely in the public eye. The evil existed then, as it does yet, as one of the great blots on modern civilisation. Even this, however, has changed greatly. There is a decided improvement, yet more drink is consumed, it is more

than double in price, and greater efforts are now being made to extinguish it. In a former chapter I alluded to this, and recent meetings here emphasise some of the remarks I made then. Rushing from one extreme to the other is not a prudent course, and generally defeats the object in view; so why aim at the impossible? The entire suppression of the liquor is just as impossible as the entire suppression of butchers, bakers, and drapers. Suppress all the evil that is in it and all that is necessary is done. Is it not worth considering whether several uses of the remedial measures taken have not been productive of a worse evil? Early closing in itself is not bad, but if pushed too far may result in a greater evil, and have not the drinking habits, in some respects changed for the worse, been caused by over restrictions. Half a century ago, before Forbes M'Kenzie was heard of, drinking to excess was all done at night. How much excess is now visible in the early forenoon? Had there been less attention paid to a reasonable and unreasonable early closing and more attention paid to restriction in the morning, there would have been a much greater improvement. The rule invariably long ago was business first and pleasure afterwards. Now we see too much of it the other way, so called pleasure first, and after that there is an unfitness for business. As mentioned in my last chapter also, the reading room in the Town Buildings, and its adjunct, the tobacco shop opposite, was the sole club in Ayr. Possibly also it was enough. Now, however, there are about as many clubs as hotels, and certainly they are much more dangerous. The control of clubs is entirely in the hands of the members—no early closing on the week-day or Sunday. Verily we may shut all our public-houses, but it only means an increase of clubs, and so the labour of our well-meaning friends is so much labour lost. However, there is a fair chance yet of an improvement taking place. Moderation is gaining ground. Half a century ago there were many who condemned dancing; even Good Templar Lodges, which formerly would not recognise it, now have resolved to permit it in moderation. If moderation is extended much further I can see an improvement by having two extremes abolished. It is the extremists in everything who lead to extremes in a different direction. Not only in our social habits, as already mentioned by us in our Schools and Churches, our Railways, and other matters, moderation is more to be desired than a yielding to the extreme desires even of well-meaning fanatics. The extreme observed in the management of our schools has now disappeared, and

a liberality—only prevented from going to excess by a somewhat niggardly electorate—is now providing us with better buildings and a much improved system. The extreme strictness of the Scottish Sabbath is also now disappearing, if indeed it has not gone altogether. We must watch it does not go too far. Our churches are more comfortable and more like places of worship, and church services are rapidly approaching human endurance. The three services of two hours each have disappeared; even the two services of one hour and a half each will soon be among the things that were. The modern sermon of a quarter of an hour, like the half-column leader in the newspaper instead of the old column and a half, has taken its place. Long sermons now are only those which have been preached over and over again. New ones are much shorter. Some time spent in condensation, and many of the friends of our youth or even of our more mature years, under which we have yawned when more than a half hour long, if reduced to the modern limit, would be really enjoyable as well as profitable. Here, perhaps, however, I am transgressing, and am practising what I am condemning. I am moralising too much, and must return to my reminiscences where I left off in my last chapter. No more erroneous notions have existed regarding anything than in connection with our railways. All expectations regarding them have either been exceeded to a great extent, or completely falsified. In their infancy fifty or sixty years ago, it was never foreseen what they would become. They were to extinguish horse labour, but they have succeeded in extending it. All vehicles and other conveyances were to be done away with, but they are more numerous than ever. In their time they have been threatened with extinction by tramways, cycles, motor cars, etc., but they still go on increasing. We are now long past the Glenmutchkin stage, but railways still go on increasing, even though we have more systems than were thought of under Old Ebony's famous railway caricature. Ayr had settled down with its railway completed to Glasgow and Carlisle. Two hours took us into Glasgow, and twenty hours took us to London. It is worth while giving a description of the Ayr railway station as it stood when it was thought that railway enterprise had reached its height: —"Ayr Station was one of the first used on the Ayrshire Railway. The southern end of the Ayrshire Railway was opened first; and the locomotive engines were taken to Ayr, and there placed on the line. The depot, as it was called, was regarded then as a building of considerable pretensions and architectural attractions. The front building

was two storeys high. In the upper was the station-master's residence; in the lower, the booking office, parcel office, and station-master's room. 'The booking office entrance, under a portico, was approached by a flight of steps. Passengers arriving at the station made their exit by a wide gate on the east side of the buildings. Immediately in the rear of the booking office, at right angles to it, were the departure and arrival platforms. Parallel to the platform shed, and on the west side of it, was the goods shed. On the east side of the line were an engine shed and workshops."

No wonder that at least a great proportion of the inhabitants thought it was a great piece of nonsense removing the station from Lottery Ha' to the Townhead. Such was the contracted vision of the time. Even now Lottery Ha' itself is wiped out, and Newton Terrace as well has been merged into the goods station, and quite possibly it may have to be enlarged again in a few years. The necessity for the change was the extension of the railway southward. Ayr had ceased to be a terminus. The Dalmellington Railway was opened in August, and the Ayr and Maybole in October, 1856; and in December of the same year contracts for the new station were let. The works were pushed forward quickly, so that the station was opened on the 1st July, 1857. The station was afterwards enlarged, and several buildings added. Carriage ways lead to and from the station on both sides, and unoccupied ground has been planted with evergreens, etc. When the passenger station was opened at the Townhead of Ayr, the depot at Lottery Ha' was converted into a luggage station, and continues to be used as such. New locomotive sheds were erected in 1877, on the north side of the town, in the angle formed by the junction of the Mauchline and main lines. In connection with the locomotive department small repairs are here executed. The engine shed—a handsome stone building—is 300 feet long by about 90 broad, with a lofty open roof. Even this, however, was only bringing us up to a quarter of a century ago. A still newer station and a magnificent hotel were erected in 1885. The station was supposed at the time to be final, being the third station erected, but even it has proved too small, and there is now under consideration a great enlargement, the addition of a double line of rails, with sidings and extra platforms, fully justifying my statement regarding the unforeseen extension of the railway system. I notice this all the more particularly at this time when practically a new era of travelling is setting in. Motor cars and tramways are said to be the

mode of conveyance of the future. That this will affect railways to any extent will be shown in the future as in the past. The one will only aid the other. We are getting accustomed to alarmist predictions now, and can take them at a great discount. Motors will no more extinguish railways than railways did horses. They will only prove an addition, not a substitute, and it will be found there is room for all.

Having devoted so much space to the history of the railway, I may as well continue it to its completion—if such a word can be used in connection with the Glasgow and South-Western. I take the following from official sources.

As we have already mentioned elsewhere, the extension of the railway system to the south of Ayr was early considered, and surveys of the ground were made when the Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock, and Ayr Railway was in course of formation. The idea of a railway to the south of Ayr was never lost sight of, and the proposal of any scheme of the kind always received the support of the Ayrshire Railway Company. After the failure of the Belfast Union Railway scheme, a less ambitious proposal was made for the formation of a railway from Ayr to Maybole. It was cordially supported, as less capital would be involved in its construction, and besides being in itself an immediate advantage, it would be an instalment of the longer line formerly proposed. Authority was given the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company and the new Company to enter into arrangements for the working of the Maybole line. The Company constituted by the Act met, for the first time, on the 25th September, 1854, when the Directors reported that a provisional contract for making the line had been entered into before they went to Parliament. They considered it satisfactory, and said it would be completed so as to enable the works to be commenced early next month. This provisional contract provided for the completion of the line for £24,453. In November of that same year the contractor broke ground, and the works went on steadily. The Directors of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company went to Parliament for power to hold half the stock of the Maybole Company. They were opposed by the Directors of the latter, and the result was that an arrangement was entered into by which the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company agreed to hold £10,000, under certain regulations as to the voting upon the stock. They were also to work the line. On the 15th September, 1856, the line was opened for goods and mineral traffic,

and was ready for passengers also, but passenger traffic was not permitted by the Government Inspector till the Dalmellington line was approved of. It was opened on the 13th October, 1857. In terms of the agreement between the Companies, the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company worked the line for five years, and received 35 per cent. of the gross revenue from the line. In 1865, owing to some slight differences with the working Company, difficulties arose, but ultimately these were overcome, and new arrangements were entered into. In July, 1863, the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company obtained a short Act, confirming an agreement entered into with the Maybole Railway Company for the working of the Maybole Railway. This agreement continued in operation till 1871, when the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company acquired Parliamentary powers to work the line permanently. In August, 1871, the Directors of the Maybole Company told their shareholders that the Bill promoted by the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company, to enable them to acquire and work the Maybole line, on the footing that the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company should pay the Maybole Company a fixed rent therefor, sufficient to yield the shareholders of the Maybole Company a perpetual dividend of 7 per cent., less Income Tax, and securing the rent by a lien over the line and works, had passed, and been acted on. They therefore declared a dividend at the rate of 7 per cent., and have gone on doing so ever since. Before the Maybole line was acquired by the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company, the revenue yielded dividends ranging from 4 to 6¾ per cent., besides the payment of 35 per cent. for working expenses. The Ayr and Maybole Company is still an independent corporation, and meets at statutory periods to declare the statutory dividends of 7 per cent.

The extension of the line southwards into the rich agricultural district of Carrick, was likely to be followed by so many advantages to the district, that a company was speedily formed to carry it beyond the ancient "capital of Carrick" to its most important seaport, Girvan. In 1856—the year in which the Ayr and Maybole Railway was opened—a company was formed, and a Bill promoted, for the construction of a railway from Maybole to Girvan. This Company's measure received the sanction of Parliament on the 14th July, 1856. The Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company was to have power to contribute £20,000 to the undertaking, and hold shares to the amount. The railway was mapped as diverging out of the Ayr and May-

bole Line, near Lyonstone Farmhouse, Maybole, and terminating at Watermouth Park, Girvan. The works were let and begun in 1857, but the contractors did not make such rapid progress as could have been desired. In September, 1858, the Directors of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company informed their shareholders that the works were nearly completed, and that the line might be opened in January following. At the end of the next six months, however, they could only say that considerable progress had been made. In September, 1859, they said the works were being pressed on with vigour. In the session of Parliament that year an Act was obtained to enable the Maybole and Girvan Railway Company to raise additional capital, and to authorise the deviation of their line near Grangestone. It seemed the expenditure of the works had been greater than the Company had contemplated; the capital of the Company and borrowed money had become exhausted. Authority was given in the Act to the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company to acquire the whole or part of the new stock. This Company acquired more than one half of the Girvan and Maybole Company's stock. On the passing of this measure operations received a new stimulus; and they were finished in May, 1860, and on the 24th day of that month the line was opened for passengers. The traffic on the line was wrought by the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company till 1865, when the undertaking was combined with the Glasgow and South-Western Railway under the Amalgamation Act of 5th July, 1865. Under the agreement sanctioned by that Act, the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company were to pay the Maybole and Girvan Company (1) £3 10s for each £10 share fully paid up; (2) to issue to the holders of the five per cent. preference shares of £5 each a corresponding amount of stock in the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company to bear preferential interest at the rate of 4 per cent; (3) the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company was to assume all the responsibilities of the Girvan and Maybole Company. This agreement has been carried into effect, and the Girvan and Maybole Railway is now part of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway system.

The extension of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway, so that it might catch the traffic between Ireland and the West of Scotland, was a favourite scheme with many persons interested in the success of railways, and in the promotion of local traffic. It was contemplated when the Belfast Union Railway was proposed, but had never been

given effect to. After a good deal of discussion in the public press, the movement for the construction of a railway from Girvan, to join the Portpatrick Railway, near Stranraer, was consummated in the passing of an Act of Parliament authorising its construction. The Girvan and Portpatrick Junction Railway Act was passed on the 5th July, 1865. The railway was to commence by a junction with the Maybole and Girvan line, near the latter town, and to terminate by a junction with the Portpatrick Railway near East Challoch farmstead, in the parish of Glenluce. No action was taken on this measure; and on 20th June, 1870, an Act was obtained reviving the powers conferred on the promoters by the first Act, and extending the time for the construction of the line for two years. Power was also given to divide and convert their shares into deferred and preferred stock. Under this Act, the construction of the line was let to a contractor, who engaged to take a large portion of the stock of the Company in payment of his contract. In 1872 the Company got another measure passed, giving them running powers over the Portpatrick Railway, from Dunragit to Stranraer, and authorising them to raise money for the purpose of purchasing rolling stock, and paying half the construction of the line from Dunragit to Stranraer. By this Act the Company was made to participate in the agreement entered into between the Portpatrick Company and the burgh of Stranraer, regarding the use of Stranraer East Pier. The works on the line were proceeded with very slowly. The engineering difficulties were greater than had been anticipated, and floods swept away bridges and embankments after they had been built. In October, 1876, the line was opened throughout for passenger traffic.

I complete my notice of the growth of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway by giving the dates of the extensions and amalgamations of the various branches since the railway was first opened:—

Name of line.	Opened.
Ayr to Mauchline, ...	1870
Ayr to Cumnock, ...	1872
Ardrossan to West Kilbride, ...	1878
West Kilbride to Fairlie, ...	1880
Fairlie to Largs, ...	1885
Paisley Canal Line, ...	1885
Paisley to Potterhill, ...	1886
Newmilns to Darvel, ...	1896
Gatehead to Hurlford, ...	1902

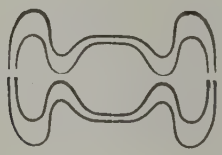
Name of line.	Opened.
Potterhill to Barrhead, ...	1902
Mauchline to Catrine, ...	1903
Maidens and Turnberry, ...	1906

AMALGAMATIONS.

	Date of Amalgamation.
Ardrossan Railway, ...	1854
Ayr and Dalmellington, ...	1858
Ayr and Maybole, ...	1871
Maybole and Girvan, ...	1865
Castle Douglas and Dumfries, ...	1865
Kirkcudbright, ...	1865
Bridge of Weir, ...	1865
Greenock and Ayrshire, ...	1872
St. Enoch Station, ...	1883
Girvan and Portpatrick, ...	1892
City of Glasgow Union, ...	1896
Kilmarnock and Troon, ...	1899
Troon Harbour, ...	1901
Joint Line to Kilmarnock, ...	1873
Joint Line to Renfrew, ...	1903

HOTELS.

	Opened.
St. Enoch, ...	1879
Ayr, ...	1886
Dumfries (New Hotel), ...	1897
Turnberry, ...	1906



OPENING OF THE GLASGOW AND AYR RAILWAY, 11th AUGUST, 1840. (Taken from an Old Engraving.)

Ayr Station Hotel.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Railway Officials.

If I wanted to illustrate in the most effective manner the changes and improvements which have been carried out during the past 50 or 60 years, specially Railway affairs, I could not do better than draw attention to the two foregoing illustrations. In the preceeding page there is an illustration of the first Railway Station in Ayr (now the Goods Station), which for many years was ample for all its passengers, goods, and mineral traffic. It is gaily bedecked for the opening day of the Railway, and is consequently seen at its best. At the top of this page is an illustration of the present stations and hotel, one of the largest and finest buildings in Ayr and yet no more than sufficient for the work to be overtaken, although the Goods Station has been much enlarged, and other depots formed in different parts to carry on other railway work. Ayr is not now as formerly a terminus of the Railway, but it is greater still, it remains one of its principal centres from which radiate in five different directions the important branches of the system. Ayrshire is still as it always was the principal field of the South-Western Railway, and the county town holds in it the prominent place.

It was well for Ayrshire that the beginning of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway was known first of all as the "Ayrshire Railway," and that the first part—

possibly all that was originally intended—was the line from Glasgow to Ayr. Had what is now the main line been made first and been known as the Glasgow and Carlisle Railway, and branches afterwards made to Ayr and Greenock, Ayrshire would not have been so well developed and the management would in all probability have been in other hands. The railway, as it now exists, would have been no better—probably worse; Ayrshire certainly would have been worse, and Ayrshire men would not have been so prominent in its management as they have been from the first. For long it was known as the "Ayrshire Railway"; as it stands, the original shares are yet known as "Ayrshires." I am paying no undue compliment to the successive railway officials who have almost monopolised the management of the whole system since it was inaugurated when I indicate that they have managed so well, but the most credit is due to the western district that it has produced those who have so successfully managed it, and that for upwards of sixty years almost the whole management of all the departments has been in the hands of natives of the West, who have thereby not only benefited the shareholders of the company, but reflected credit on the Shire. Of course, now and again there have been importations of fresh blood from other companies. These, it has to be frankly admitted, were well worthy of being transferred to any other sphere; but as a rule promotion has always been made from Ayrshire railway-trained stock, and as a rule also the recruiting ground has been the great Western County. In all departments we find Ayrshire prominent, and while it might have been expected that a concern which had been so successfully managed from the first might have attracted the attention of other companies to take away a number of their officials who had contributed to that success, it must be borne in mind that the steady extension of the G. and S.-W. system has always been sufficient to permit of the advancement of their officials without permitting of much inducement to attract them elsewhere. Notwithstanding this, however, there have been exceptions—great exceptions to the rule—of Ayrshire men, and Ayrshire railway-trained men having been induced to transfer their services. The most notable example of this is Mr George Mathieson (an Ayrshire man, of course), who, having gone through all the grades on the South-Western till he was superintendent of the line, was first of all selected out of a great list of prominent railway officials who were nominated for one of the greatest appointments in Australia. After bringing the whole railway

system of one of our most important colonies to a high state of perfection, he was then promoted to be general manager of the Midland Railway, and it is not too much to say, one of the best general managers that the Midland, in many respects the greatest of British railways, ever had. Mr Mathieson entered the G. and S.-W. service in 1859, became superintendent in 1875, left for Australia in 1889, and returned after twelve years' service there to become general manager of the Midland. It is noteworthy that Mr Turner, whom he succeeded there, was for nearly two years goods manager in the Glasgow and South-Western Railway during the time Mr Mathieson was superintendent. Two other Ayrshire men also have been promoted at different times from the South-Western service to other railway managerships. Mr Tatlow is now manager of the Midland Great Western Railway in Ireland, and Mr James M'Clymont is now manager of the Straits Settlements Railways, both important concerns, which have flourished in their hands, and reflecting credit not only on them but on the service in which they first commenced their railway careers. The most recent promotion, or rather transference, of a railway official to another line has been that of Mr M'Ewan, formerly principal assistant in the General Manager's office at St. Enoch, who is now traffic manager of the Highland Railway, whose headquarters are in Inverness. Mr M'Ewan entered the G. and S.-W. service in 1874, and after a quarter of a century's experience in every department, under Mr Mathieson as Superintendent, and latterly under Mr Cooper as General Manager, he received his appointment on the Highland Railway, for which he was in every way well qualified. This railway, like the G. and S.-W., is now rapidly extending its boundaries, and becoming one of the most important Scotch railways. Inverness forms a fine centre for a large and important district, and under Mr M'Ewan's management the traffic is now rapidly on the increase. The directors have on two different occasions marked their approval of Mr M'Ewan's efforts, and at the recent conference of railway officials in Inverness the Highland railway traffic manager was their guide, philosopher, and friend on several excursions and visits to important places in the neighbourhood, thus adding, to what was a business conference, a pleasure which did not in any way unpleasantly or injuriously affect the duties which had to be undertaken. Few lines present the same attractions as that of the now extended Highland Railway. Its most recent extension is to Dornoch, the capital of the County of Sutherland, and Mr M'Ewan is

evidently taking a leaf from the book of the Glasgow and South-Western, from which he graduated. I cannot help taking an extract here from a contemporary describing what the Highland Company are doing. It is similar to what the Glasgow and South-Western has been, and is still, doing to extend profitably its system.

"The Highland Railway Company, eager to supply the wants of the holiday-making public, have erected a very fine hotel at Dornoch, an ancient burgh, picturesquely situated on the shore of the Dornoch Firth. Dornoch itself is an interesting town; its neighbourhood is the very district in which to spend a spell of leisure; the Dornoch air is fresh and bracing; Dornoch Golf Links have been popular for a couple of centuries. The chief front of the new hotel, which faces the south-east, commands a great stretch of the Sutherlandshire coast. A verandah extends along the entire length of this frontage. The inside arrangements of the hotel are at once comfortable and artistic. The entrance hall is 50 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 14 feet high. On either side are alcoves or recesses, with arched roofs, forming capital lounges. To the right is the dining-room, capable of seating 100 guests. On the other side of the hall is situated a writing-room, a smoking-room, a billiard-room, and a golfers' corner, containing a locker-room, together with a number of private sitting-rooms. The drawing-room is situated on the first floor, and commands a splendid view of the golf course, the surrounding country, and the sea. There are also here suites of parlours and bedrooms. The upper flats are devoted to bedrooms, bath-rooms, and other adjuncts to the general completeness of the equipment. There are in all 64 bedrooms, apart from the 22 reserved for the hotel staff. The kitchen, stores, cooking-rooms, etc., which are of the most up-to-date character, are situated at the rear of the building. All the apartments, corridors, and staircases are illuminated by electricity; an excellent supply of water has been introduced; and the sanitary appliances are of the most modern type. In the hotel grounds, which extend to four acres, are tennis and croquet greens. The golf courses are two in number, one being a gentleman's, and the other set apart for the use of ladies. The ladies' course has 18 holes; that of the gentlemen is 6000 yards in length."

I must not, however, linger too long over those whose excellent training in the South-Western has fitted them for other pastures, where they are flourishing, but confine myself more to those of the period I am writing about, viz., the middle of last century. Mr Johnstone, the first

General Manager of the Company, I have already noticed. Not only was he General Manager but he was Engineer of the Company as well—a combination of offices which only such an energetic and able man as Mr Johnstone could fill. It was no light work, and it speaks volumes for Mr Johnstone's ability that it was so well done on a railway where progress was made by leaps and bounds. An able man, however, contrives to pick out able assistants. He found this assistant in the engineering department in Mr Galloway. Strange to say, there is no record of Mr Galloway's appointment as engineer of the company, he seems to have been there from the first. He was a full half century in the company's service. He would be "young Galloway" in Mr Johnstone's time, and for many years he was "old Galloway," the Company's respected engineer. An Ayrshire man, of course, and whatever he did was thorough. His idea of economy was to have everything substantial. What lasted longest was cheapest in the end. Doubtless advancing years and pressure of General Manager's work Galloway naturally, even without appointment, became sole engineer, and held office for the long time he did. He trained many who, after graduating in the St Enoch engineer's office, gained prominent positions elsewhere. Among others was Mr Mercer, for some time Ayr Burgh Surveyor, and whose son presently carries on business in Ayr as an Architect. I have often heard the late Mr Mercer speak highly of his old master, the engineer of the South-Western Railway, beneath whose somewhat stiff exterior was a great fund of humour and kindliness.

A notice of those prominent in the railway world connected with the Glasgow and South-Western, and also with Ayr, would be very incomplete without a notice of Mr Quintin Young Lawson. A native of Newton, Q. Y., by which initials he is and always was well known, entered the railway service early in 1855 at junior clerk in the Parcel Office at Ayr Station, then at the north end of the New Bridge. His promotion was steady and rapid, till in 1863 he was appointed Stationmaster at Stevenston, and in the following year was transferred to Johnstone, where he succeeded one of the oldest Stationmasters in the service. During the six years he was there, the Greenock and Ayrshire Railway was opened, making Johnstone a much more important station. But at the end of 1870, Q. Y. accepted the appointment of Superintendent of the City of Glasgow Union Railway, a new undertaking under the joint auspices of the Glasgow and South-Western and the North British Railways. He ultimately became secretary

and general manager, a position he occupied until 1896, when the two proprietary companies took powers to divide the line between them. He then accepted the appointment of District Manager and Superintendent for Scotland of the East Coast Railways, which he held till 1906, when he retired on the age limit, and was made the recipient of the presentation of a beautiful silver rose bowl from the members of the East Coast Conference, while from a numerous circle of friends in Glasgow and elsewhere he was presented with a valuable purse and a handsome diamond ring for Mrs Lawson.

Mr and Mrs Lawson have resided for many years in Kirkintilloch, and it will be an aid to these "Reminiscences" if I give an extract from a local paper, not only to show the estimation in which Q. Y. is held where he is best known, but also his views on the changes which have taken place during the past fifty years.

A friendship expressed through a gift of two hundred guineas is a friendship worth cherishing. That was the form a testimonial to Mr Q. Y. Lawson (an ex-chairman of our School Board) took last week, on the occasion of his retiring, under the age limit, from the service of the East Coast Railways.

His friends embraced the opportunity of his retiring to show in a tangible way how much they thought of him, that sentiment finding expression in a testimonial of 200 guineas presented to him at the meeting on Friday afternoon. Sir John Ure Primrose presided, and among those present were Rev. Messrs Morrison and Anton, Bailies Douglas and Watson, Lieut.-Col. Main, Mr A. B. Findlay, Mr Thos. A. Wilson, Professor M'Call, Mr John Yuille (Campsie Glen), Mr Wm. Speirs (Lenzie), Mr T. D. Torrance, and Mr A. B. Findlay.

The Chairman said he could not help wondering, as he sat in that room, how it came about that in the full tide of a busy commercial day some 120 gentlemen gathered together for a little to give expression to an honourable and high quality of humanity in recognising and honouring one of their fellows. He thought it was a delightful feature of life that in the career of almost every man who had led a strenuous, reputable, and honourable life there came a period when his fellows desired by some tangible expression to let him know how much they honoured and esteemed him, and with what pleasure they gathered together to wish him God-speed on a further stage of life's journey. That, he took it, was the moving impulse in the heart of everyone present that afternoon. Mr Lawson's career had been that

of many capable Scots. Fifty-one years ago he entered the service of a great railway—the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company—and by carefulness, prudence, and capacity had commended himself to those who directed its interests. His path had always been onward and upward, accumulating years only bringing him greater confidence on the part of those who had entrusted high destinies to his control. And now, when the strenuous battle was over, and when he reasonably looked forward—for a long time he hoped—to travel the level plateau—or perhaps attaining to the mountain tops from which he would take a view of the past and, he believed, would also take courage and hope for the future—it was delightful when he entered on that period which he thought should come to every man in his lifetime—and he felt he was rapidly approaching that period himself when the troubles of the chair, when the vexations and anxieties of business would be memories of the past, and when with trowel in hand he sought to raise chrysanthemums that no neighbour could rival, or in the verdant spring when the primrose and the snowdrop followed one another in beautiful succession, he hoped the quality of spring and the feeling of spring would ever operate in their friend's heart and in his own. As they saw nature reproducing herself with every recurring season, so might the hope which was beyond this narrow life grow stronger in his heart. They hoped that for Mr Lawson, for himself, and for all of them, that they would be able to look upon the past as only a preparation for the higher development of a life which here was charming and delightful, and which they believed firmly in their hearts had chapters yet to be revealed full of entrancement and knowledge, and fuller and nearer perfection. He had said that Mr Lawson's career had been a sequence. He would not enter into any review of the progressive steps by which he had ultimately reached a high pinnacle in a service that was of great value to the community, and an honourable avenue for the energies and intellect of any man. But this he would say, that Mr Lawson left active service in the full possession of all his qualities, physical and intellectual, and left active life with what was far dearer and more precious, the confidence, the trust, the admiration of everyone with whom in his lifetime he had come in contact. He would only add this hope, that in the years to come there might be for him and his a period of very great happiness and delight. In asking him to accept a purse of 200 guineas—(applause)—he asked him to regard it as a tangible expression of the love, affection, and good wishes of everyone who had subscribed. (Applause.)

Mr Stephenson handed over for Mrs Lawson a diamond ring, in an ivory case, suitably inscribed as follows:—"Presented to Mrs Q. Y. Lawson by her husband's fellow-employees and friends as a token of esteem and respect.—Nov., 1906." He said they wished to convey to Mrs Lawson their hearty congratulations on her restoration to health.

Mr Lawson first replied on behalf of his wife, remarking that it afforded him the utmost satisfaction to do so. Speaking for himself, he would not say that at that moment he was somewhat taken aback by their kindness, because that would be inaccurate. But he was greatly taken aback when first it came to his knowledge that a scheme of this sort was in operation. He had no expectation that the public would have made any recognition of the services which it had been a pleasure and honour to him to render on their behalf and his companies'. The last ten years of his life had been connected with the East Coast Railway Companies, but prior to that he was for many years with the City of Glasgow Railway Co., and it was there, he believed, that his interests most centred, and where he became more immediately acquainted and connected with the many friends he now saw around him. Although that extended back 35 years, that was a short period in one's life. He could not have realised that he had got hold of the sympathy of so many friends. He felt exceedingly gratified to think that the little he had done in connection with the duties that fell to his lot should have met with such a measure of expression as they had that day. (Applause.) Looking back half-a-century one must recognise that much had taken place in the interval. For instance, when he started his railway career the engines that worked their trains were of a very small and meagre character compared with those unseemly monsters—those leviathans that now travelled their lines. There was such a comparison as one could scarcely express otherwise than by saying that those old engines might very well be appropriated and hung at their watch-chains as little ornaments. (Laughter.) It was not only the locomotives that had so greatly changed, but also the rolling stock. When he began his career the stand-up carriages were still running on the Greenock section of the Caledonian Railway, while the carriages of the Glasgow and South-Western were like snuff-boxes compared with their palatial successors of the present time. But the change that had come about was the case all over the country. As they knew, he had reached the age limit —that age when an officer was obliged to pack up his portfolio, hand it over to another, and walk out saying "Good-bye."

Space will not permit me to give notes on all those who have figured in the Railway Company's service of fifty years ago. There are many still living, many who have been almost half-a-century in the Company's employment. Almost all of them are Ayrshire men, indicating either that Ayrshire people are long lived or that the South-Western employment is of a somewhat healthy nature. It is only a year or two since Mr Hugh Smith, also hailing from Ayrshire, retired after half-a-century's service, finishing as opening. His long service was recognised by the public a purse of sovereigns and other recognitions of their worth, and a handsome pension from the Company. In his day, perhaps, Mr Hugh Smith was the best known official in the Company's service, and, like the great majority of his colleagues, he was most obliging, and he returned to Ayrshire with, it was hoped, many years before him and his better half. "Man proposes and God disposes." He spent only a few years at Cassillis, where he died. The active life he had led was no preparation for a lengthened existence in retirement.

The extension of the railway year after year has led to the creation of new offices which were not thought of fifty years ago. Among other positions of importance there is now a factor looking after all the property not strictly connected with the railway, but belonging to the company all the same, having been acquired for extension purposes and presently occupied by tenants at will, under the jurisdiction of this factor. The holder of this office since it was introduced till now is Mr Hutchinson, and even in this, as a new office, the same has followed as in the older offices, an Ayrshire man has the appointment. Mr Hutchinson is not only an Ayrshire man, but a native of the county town, and if the factorship does not distinguish him he somewhat distinguishes the factorship. He was born in Chapelbrae, Wallacetown. His grandfather was John Hutchinson, a merchant in Ayr for over fifty years, and a burgess of the town. His grandmother was Agnes Watt, a daughter of David Watt, the miller at Doonfoot Mill. David Watt is buried in Alloway Kirkyard, and it is recorded on his tombstone, which is a little to the left of the entrance to the graveyard, that he was the last person baptised in Alloway Kirk. It is mentioned in the family bible in Mr Hutchison's possession that the baptism referred to took place in the year 1756, and also the fact of David Watt being a school boy with Robert Burns, the poet. John Hutchison, the father of my friend, the factor, was born in 1819, and married in 1846 Jane Cairns,

daughter of William Baird, who for a number of years was supervisor of excise in Ayr. Mr Hutchison remembers how his father used to relate that Thom, the mason, cut the figures of Tam o' Shanter and Soutar Johnny in an old stable belonging to his father in Wallacetown, and that his father posed as Tam o' Shanter—the rig and furr stockings being knitted specially for that purpose by one of his daughters. The engagement ring of Mr Hutchison's grandmother, Agnes Watt, is still in the possession of the family, and is presently worn by Mrs Hutchison. The following is the inscription on the tombstone in Alloway Kirkyard referred to:—

Erected by
John Hutchison, merchant, Wallace Street, Ayr, in memory of his father-in-law, David Watt, miller, the last person baptized in Alloway Kirk, who died on 2nd October, 1823, aged 67 years, and Agnes M'Clelland, his mother-in-law, who died 20th February, 1828, aged 81 years.

I have lingered long over these railway reminiscences and generally on railway matters from 1840. They have been the most prominent feature in the life of the county during that time. Nothing has contributed more to the changes which have taken place in all departments of life during the past eighty years than railways. Looking back, and forming an unbiassed opinion, one can see now that the hostile feeling which was for long held regarding them was very undeserved. I speak not of other places or other Companies which I know little of. There may be grounds for fault-finding elsewhere, but Ayr at least has little to grumble at. The desire for a competing line has almost died away, and it would be difficult to make out how we would be bettered by such competition. I know places with competing lines certainly not so well off. We have been specially fortunate in the management of our local lines. My native predilection gives that credit almost wholly to Ayrshire being so prominent in the management. That it would have been as well managed by natives of another shire I am not prepared to admit. It might have been, but that is admitting a great deal. What has been done is always more reliable to be looked at than what might have been. I know of other companies where changes have been made in the management that are unknown in the Glasgow and South-Western. Mr Johnstone, the first General Manager, seems to have stamped on the company what a General Manager should be. Possibly his three successors had not time during their comparatively short tenure of office to do much more than follow in his

footsteps. They were departmental men. Their attention had always been confined to the duties of secretary or solicitor; indeed, after their appointment as General Manager, they combined these offices with the higher office. The present General Manager has grown up in the service, and inherited all Mr Johnstone's successful method of management, and with a full knowledge of every department, and natural gifts, he is a most worthy successor in every respect. It is an open secret that other companies have cast eyes on the South-Western when their General Managership was vacant. A prosperous company like the Glasgow and South-Western will, it is to be hoped, so arrange matters as to make any change, so far as Mr Cooper is concerned, undesirable.

The length to which I have drawn out these comments on railway matters might suggest a lengthy chapter on steamers. This, however, I will spare my readers. In point of fact, though a seaport town, and well situated to be a great maritime port, Ayr did not bulk largely fifty years ago as a steamboat centre. We had a steamer weekly to Campbeltown and another to Girvan and Stranraer and occasional pleasure trips; and once the merchants of Ayr built a steamer, the "Robert Burns," to the extent of £100 each. The steamer ran for two years, paying no dividend, while at least ten per cent. was expected. She latterly was sold, the shareholders having £8 returned for their £100. The boon I refer to as having been conferred on them was that it cured many of a desire of ever taking shares in ships again, where greater losses might have been sustained. We had also the "Bonnie Doon," the "Emerald," the "Alma," and the "Earl of Carrick," all traders to Liverpool and other places, under the energetic management of ex-Provost Steele, but after all this was limited compared with what we have now. The Ayr Steam Shipping Company gives us now a splendid service to Campbeltown, Dublin, Belfast, and Larne, and is every year extending with great success the development of Ayr as a port. The Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company's steamers also add much to the attractiveness of Ayr as a summer resort by two steamers running daily. The revenue to the Harbour from these sources alone is more than double the whole revenue of the Harbour in my younger days. I may only indicate how much the harbour has increased since then by mentioning that the revenue now is more thousands annually than it was formerly hundreds.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CLUBS AND HOWFS.

The times I am writing of refer of course to a period —which a few consider the good old times—before the advent of Forbes M'Kenzie. Early closing of public-houses or even of other places of business was then unknown. Public-houses, at least, had scarcely any fixed hour of closing, but depended very much on occasions, if money was plentiful or credit bad. They closed, in fact, when customers took in into their heads to leave, not so much because they had got enough—for enough is an unknown quantity so far as drink is concerned, unless we adopt the principle indicated in the inconsistent but all the same true saying, that "One is enough, two are too many, and three are too few." That at all events is the experience of many. If content with one that would be all right; it is enough, for two in many cases are too many, and when three are taken the conviction is sure to arise in the mind that three are too few, and we must go to four or five, these still remaining too few. Many or few, however, the closing hour was generally when customers chose to leave, except on special occasions, when to leave early was not expected. Some houses had a nominal fixed time, but that was voluntary, and early closing was more honoured in the non-observance than in the observance. It was nothing unusual for boosers to sit away into the early hours of the morning—indeed, not very early hours. Forbes M'Kenzie put an end to a great deal of this by fixing 11 o'clock as a closing hour, and after a good many years' experience even this was reduced to 10 o'clock. I have already alluded to this in these reminiscences, and have no desire to introduce contentious matter; but this desire to make people sober by Act of Parliament seems like all other legislative enactments—made no matter with what care and good intention, and acted upon with the most rigid vigour—to carry with it the old adage that all Acts of Parliament can have coaches with six horses easily run through them. It does seem extraordinary that we should have an enactment which compels all licensed houses to close their doors at ten o'clock and not to be opened before eight o'clock in the morning, and that heavy payments should be enacted for this restricted privilege, since a privilege it must be, when only a limited number are allowed to enjoy it. There is an evident joke under

this term "License." A license in ordinary case means a liberty to do certain things—in public house affairs a license means a restriction. The license-holder has to pay for being tied down to do certain things, which, without payment, he would be allowed to do, no one being able to interfere with him. That enjoyment, however, of having your freedom restricted by the hard and fast lines on which the license is granted seems to be much desired. The police at all times are entitled to invade your private apartments, and otherwise to interfere with the management, as if they were joint proprietors of the concern. Certainly public-houses seem to court a great deal of "publicity," when people actually pay to be prevented from doing what they like. On the other hand there are houses which require no license; they pay nothing at all events. They can be opened without asking permission. They are conducted on a sort of independent manner—open when they like, shut when they like, and in fact have all the privileges and even more than the publican had sixty years ago. These houses are called Clubs, but a rose by any other name will smell as sweet; so a public-house without a license, if called a club, is even more sweet than a public-house with a license, which prevents the holders doing anything and makes them pay well for not being allowed to do it. In the good old times of which I write, there were no clubs; there were public-houses which were licensed to sell spirits, etc., and they sold them how they liked, and to whom they liked. They payed for this license since it was a license and worth paying for; but now seemingly the best license—the real license—is to have a club, for which no license is required, but where everything can be done which was done in licensed premises fifty years ago.

I am not contending in any way that we are either better or worse now than we were then, it is a question for everyone according to their own tastes to decide where the improvement comes in. I have already mentioned in these columns the only thing approaching a club we had in these days was the Reading Room in the Town Buildings, now occupied as the Town Clerk's office. There were upwards of a hundred members (guinea subscribers). Papers, it must be remembered, then were 4½d and magazines were half-a-crown. The penny paper and the sixpenny magazine were then unknown. A few daily papers, each costing about £5 per annum, the illustrated weeklies, and the local papers, with a few magazines, exhausted the limited funds, and gave a reading room much valued then, but not so good as can be got now for a much smaller annual sub-

scription. It was an excellent meeting-place, however, and when the news of the day had been fully gone over, the usual resort was to go across the street for a smoke and a crack (for silence was insisted on in the reading-room), and if there was no news of importance to be had from the papers, it was not unusual to manufacture them over the cigar. Cigarettes then were unknown and pipes were infra dig, and the cigar indicated the gentleman, with all the privileges of a gentleman to talk scandal, to tell drawing-room stories, and to perpetrate some practical jokes I wish to tell. This was about the most prominent feature of 26 New Bridge Street. It was varied at election times—municipal and parliamentary. There was considerable wire-pulling, this being somewhat of a miniature Carlton. Junior Conservatives and Liberals had not then entered the field; all were seniors. I would not, however, like to vouch for the fact that the seniors then were not as juvenile in some of their pranks as we could find in our Junior Clubs of the present day.

If the Athenians of old spent their time in hearing and telling of some new thing they had their imitators in Ayr at the time I allude to, who spent much of their time in improving stories and perpetrating jokes at somebody's expense, and the Mars hill of Ayr was not far from the "Steeple root." The habitues of the tobacco shop were numerous, and though, as a rule, they were Conservative in politics, that was not by any means a hard and fast rule, for many of the warmest friends differed in politics, as they do at the present day. However, Toryism predominated, Cigars and Conservatives were almost synonimous, and it would have surprised many if any Radical scheme had emanated from this rendezvous of smoke.

I cannot venture to go fully into the names and tell stories of many of those who were among the most prominent of those who assembled here. The great majority have long ago "crossed the bourne," some have only gone recently, and but few of the "boys of the old brigade" remain. There are relatives, however, who might not care to hear some of the escapades recorded; not that there was anything very bad in them, still times have changed, and many actions which then were freely laughed at and enjoyed would be considered "not class enough" now. For instance, there was a noted public-house then in existence, known as "Mallie's Howf." The liquor, I presume, was good, but otherwise the attractions of the place were scanty and difficult to portray. It was up a close, the ceilings were low, the furniture was very poor, the floor was covered

with sawdust and seldom cleaned, and the whole surroundings were very different from what we now associate with a gin palace. But here night after night some of the most respected citizens would meet after reading and smoking hours, and sit on to the sma' hours, evidently happy, since the meeting took place night after night. The story is told of a "better half" of one of Mallie's customers, who wondered much what the attraction could be which induced so many husbands and parents to forsake their own fireside so regularly and frequent Mallie's. She paid a visit to the howf, and in the most insinuating manner prevailed on Mallie to show her the apartment where "the gentlemen met at night and passed their evenings. Mallie consented! I am afraid the sight of the apartment would not exalt the husband's reputation for being a man of taste in the eyes of the wife of his bosom. However this evidently was his taste, and she was willing to gratify it. So without her husband's knowledge she got a room in his own home fitted up as near as possible in the same style as Mallie's, with sawdust on the floor, and altogether so furnished as to correspond with the howf, and told him to invite a number of his cronies to spend an evening with him, as she wished to give them a treat. The guests arrived, and were duly ushered into the fac simile of Mallie's parlour and asked to enjoy themselves. There was plenty of whisky, sugar, and hot water, even to the thicker glasses which Mallie used, and the kettle to match. The surprise of the gentlemen was complete, and the goodwife thought she had achieved a complete victory, and that henceforth all that she and others whose husbands were inclined to stray from the bosoms of their families was to provide shabby, even dirty rooms, with sawdust strewed floors, and thereby keep the wanderers at home. The gentlemen professed to enjoy their surprise, and entered quite into what they thought was the spirit of a joke, enjoying a very pleasant evening. A characteristic remark made by one of the members, however, expressed the feelings of all viz., "Dod, this is no' bad; but, augh! it's no' Mallie's." The remark was made in the absence of the guidwife, and the sawdust cure was not persevered in. I believe they were back at Mallie's the following night. No doubt the early closing of public-houses now and the other restrictions has led to the abolition of the howfs of former days, and given us the Club, which threatens to do away even with our modern restricted licensed hotels, and certainly a good deal of home life.

The question are we more sober now than we were in the days of our grandfathers? will be answered very much

from the different points of view taken by different parties. More drink is now consumed than formerly, and if we deduct from the whole the increased number of total abstainers, there must now be more "drunks" or moderate drinkers run their moderation at a higher average than formerly, and yet if this be so it is scarcely explainable.

There is not now the old habit of dinner drinking, when there were numerous six bottle men. In our best circles drunkenness is decidedly unfashionable, and that counts for a very great deal. Put a thing out of the fashion and out it goes, but nothing is more difficult to eradicate than a fashionable vice. It must not be understood, however, that because six bottles at a sitting has been abolished, there are not still a fair number of what may be called topers. I well remember one of the most remarkable of the "old brigade," and so do many who do not rank among the oldest inhabitants. I do not think his like remains among us now. He was an excellent judge of wine, and indeed of all kinds of spirits. So satisfied was he of his proficiency in this and his certain knowledge that he could tell any liquor by taste though blindfolded, he took up the bet of a champagne dinner with a party of friends that he would do so. The test came off. He was blindfolded and forthwith every conceivable liquor was tasted, and promptly he intimated what it was. Port, sherry, claret, hock, whisky, rum, gin, brandy, sweet and bitter ale even, and porter were tasted, also various liqueurs. All were correctly named, and in some cases he could even tell the vintage. He began to chuckle, evidently feeling assured he had won his bet. He was told, however, to hold on. There were several others to taste. At length, with a clean glass he was tried with pure water. He seemed astonished and rather taken aback. He said he knew it and even said he had tasted it before, but when his friends began to chuckle in their turn, he asked them to give him time. He knew the taste of it very well, he said, only he could not just name it at once. Probably it was some sort of wine he had tasted when in London or on some special trip. He sipped it again and again, but ultimately had to give it up. He was satisfied he must have tasted it some time or other, but it must have been long ago. He lost the bet. Another story of the same old toper is worth recording. Though a native of Ayr, he had a thorough contempt for Ayr doctors. Indeed he seldom required one, for, though much addicted to drink, he kept in a fair state of health, and had often been heard making a boast of the fact that his stomach never dared to take exception to anything which he chose to send its way.

After he had, however, reached the three score years, he felt old age creeping over him, and sundry twinges reminded him that he was but mortal (from which I do not mean to insinuate he was often mortal drunk). He felt, however, somewhat anxious, and resolved to have medical advice, though refusing to have that advice from Ayr. No! He would go to the fountain head and consult an Edinburgh Professor, in the hope that a single visit to him would be worth a score of visits from the inferior doctors at home. He accordingly made an appointment with a celebrated Edinburgh Professor, and went to see him. The usual formalities were gone through. His temperature was taken, his chest was sounded, and all enquiries as to his feelings and ailments were duly noted. At last the Professor asked him—"Are you regular in your habits?" "Yes, certainly," was the reply. The Professor looked at him somewhat quizzingly, for his appearance betokened one who was not exactly regular—at least regularly moderate—and perhaps it gave good reason, for the fact that he had forgotten the taste of water.

"You say you are regular in your habits?"

"Yes, quite regular!" was the reply.

"You are not a total abstainer?"

"No, no. Thank God, no!"

"But you insist you are regular in your habits?"

"Certainly!"

"Now, look here," said the Professor, "if I am to do you any good there must be no concealment as to your habits. Incorrect information given to me will only lead me astray and do you no good; possibly it may do you harm. Again I ask you, Are you regular in your habits?"

"Again I assure you I am," was the reply.

"Are you moderate in your regularity?"

"Well, yes," was the uncertain reply.

"Now," asked the Professor, who seemed to have an idea in his mind that he will be able to get at the exact truth, "What is your regular moderate quantity per day? Just tell me how much you take regularly from morning till night."

"Well, I may tell you the first thing I take in the morning is a good stiff one to put me right. Then I take a short walk, and on coming in I take an appetiser before breakfast, and another stiff one after it to keep it down. During the forenoon I meet occasionally some friends, when I stand a "roon," another stands one, and another stands one, which keeps us comfortable till twelve o'clock. Then we have "twal-hours," when we have one or two stiff ones

again, and I go home to lunch at one. I have a little sherry and bitters and a few glasses of wine during lunch. Then a glass or two of toddy after it (I confess I'm rather fond of toddy). I go out in the afternoon and meet my chums and we have sundry 'roons,' which put me past till dinner-time, which simply means a more elaborate lunch, with a few glasses of wine and a glass or two of toddy. After dinner I go out and then the drinking begins, which is continued till after ten o'clock, and if I have not got enough by that time I take an extra tumbler or two before going to bed just to make me sleep."

This regular moderate supply for the day rather staggered the Professor, who, eyeing his patient, asked him how long he had continued this regular habit.

"Oh! for the last thirty years."

The Professor then delivered himself, and calmly told his patient he could do nothing for him. "Go away home," he added briefly. "You ought to have been dead 29 years ago."

I do not know anyone among our regular drinkers nowadays, even though they are much held up to opprobium as being so numerous and so excessive, could match this one—a prominent citizen and a power in the land. There are those who remember him well, and who know I have not overdrawn his portrait. I will put him down quietly as an exception; still, there were many, I remember, who came very near him, and possibly there are many nowadays who would come in good seconds when compared with him. I am afraid, however, I have already run up a fairly long chapter in my anecdotage. I have many more connected with the club of 50 or 60 years ago which I must give, reserving the right, however, to give as little as possible to indicate the personalities of those who are prominent in the anecdotes. Perhaps I am too straitlaced in this. One thing I can say for them of half a century ago, they were not so thin-skinned as their descendants. They rather took pleasure in being associated with wild escapades. Some of those who are now so particular would be surprised at some of the cantrips played by their progenitors, who gloried in them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PRACTICAL JOKING.

I presume it may be admitted that practical joking is not a modern habit. Though no account is given of it in more serious works, and even in some would-be funny novels we find none of it, yet many have indulged in it in very remote times. Sailors become adepts at it; thus it is we find Captain Marryat's novels redolent with the pranks of midshipmen, adding, as they do, very much to the continued popularity of these novels. Probably the indulgence in pranks is caused in societies and clubs through members, their numbers being limited, getting to know each other too well. Weaknesses are discovered and played upon; in turn the biter is sometimes bitten, and the enjoyment over this is greatly increased as compared with that when the joke is at the expense of one who is too meek and mild to resent it. The most enjoyable jokes are those in which the victim is himself fond of perpetrating them on others, or where the victim is one who has a known failing, and that failing is played upon, and, if possible, made ridiculous. Thus it was in the case I have already mentioned, where a quick temper was roused to fury in a very simple way, leading to a result which might have been taken as a lesson, and made him cautious not to so readily fly into a passion in a hurry again. It seemed to afford special delight to many to rouse a passionate man. I remember one night four well-known regular frequenters of the Cigar Divan, on leaving that rendezvous found that they had just ten minutes to spare before it rang ten o'clock, so they turned into a restaurant in Sandgate Street partly to have a dram before parting, but actuated very much at the same time by a desire to rouse the ire of the landlord, whom they knew to be very quick tempered. They found their way into the "wee back room," and ordered four glass of beer. It was duly served and tasted. Now the landlord was proud of his beer, maintaining it was the best in Ayr; and visitors knew very well that any fault found with it would raise his wrath tremendously. The bell was rung, and the girl who attended was told that the beer was bad, and ordered to take it away and bring in four glasses of special whisky. Very much to the delight of our friends a growl was heard as the girl delivered her message. Mrs Nisbet, however, who was very mild tempered, was present in shop, and prevented an explosion, and the girl took in the whiskies to the conspirators. Again the bell was rung, and the girl

appearing, was told that it was "special" whisky which was ordered (not the common blend), and she was to take it away and bring in special. This was more, however, than George could stand, and there was more than a growl this time. He was making up sandwiches at the time, and had the ham knife in his hand, and he rushed into the wee room and ordered his four visitors out of his house. I need not give the language that was used. George had a vocabulary when roused which could match that of any out of Billingsgate, and he swore at them fearfully, telling them—the low hounds—this is putting it mildly, that they only came to him when they had lost the taste of their mouths elsewhere by drinking bad whisky and when they got good stuff they did not know it. "Out of this," he cried, brandishing the ham knife which entirely did away with any mirth which was in his visitors' heads and with a speed which did credit to their agility they got out into the close by the back door thankful they had escaped. They were followed by George's vituperations which told them plainly what low fellows they were. They did not try George's temper again, but confessed they got a fright which they did not expect. One of them, I understand, called on George the following day and explained the intended joke, which pleased him amazingly, and he often told afterwards with great glee the episode, including the incident of the ham knife, which rather turned the laugh against those who had intended to have some enjoyment out of it.

Another story is told of an elder and his friend. I regret I cannot give the names for reasons which will occur to many, relatives of the parties being still living. This church elder and a very intimate friend did not, however, notwithstanding their friendship, hesitate sometimes to perpetrate a joke at each other's expense. One Sunday the elder had occasion to be consulted by one of the lady members of the congregation, which necessitated a brief conference in the churchyard. He mentioned this casually to his friend, who saw an opportunity of perpetrating a joke. He met Captain —— (again I must suppress a name which would give much point to the joke), and told him the circumstances, telling him, of course, to make the most of this kirk yard conference. The opportunity was not long in coming. The Captain met the elder, and at once commenced the attack.

"What's this ye hae been doing?"

"Doing what?" replied the astonished elder.

"Oh! you know fine; it's too bad!"

"What's too bad! I don't know."

"Oh, you need not deny it; the whole town is ringing with it. Really you should take better care."

"But I don't know what you mean. I've done nothing wrong that I know of."

"Oh! you need not deny it; it is in everybody's mouth; and really for an elder of a church and the father of a family to behave in such a manner is something terrible."

"But I know of no scandal, and anyone connecting my name with a scandal is guilty of a gross lie. Tell me what it is, and who is circulating it, and I'll put it right."

The Captain asked him what occurred in the churchyard yesterday which his friend (naming the friend) was talking about.

This was sufficient, and it was well that there was no ham knife at hand as the elder went in search of his friend to have it out with him.

They met.

The elder had a good gift of speech, and, I believe, elders sometimes swear. This one did at any rate, and he forthwith poured forth a volley of abuse on his friend until he became fairly exhausted.

When his friend could get a word in, he simply asked him if he was done now?

This of course set him on again, and another round of abuse followed, reminding his hearer of a forty years' friendship and what a faithless friend he had now shown himself to be.

Again he was exhausted and his friend was allowed to speak, and in the coolest manner possible asked him what he meant.

Then again ensued a volley and a reminder of the forty years' friendship, now closed for ever.

This was terrible!

The friend, however, stood it calmly, and allowed the elder to finish his tirade quite exhausted. It was then his turn, and with seeming calmness he inquired who told him of this accusation, and on the reply being given that it was Captain ——, then he opened on him, turning the tables, and in bitter sarcasm inquired how it was that he came to believe any story told by Captain ——, well known to be "the greatest liar in Ayr." (There was, of course, another adjective used which I don't give.) The friend proceeded, simulating with wrath, which, of course, he did not feel, but in turn denouncing the elder for his hypocrisy in professing a friendship of forty years when he was so willing to believe the word of a liar. He nearly equalled the indignant wrath of the elder, and ordered him from his presence, never to come near him with any of his professed

friendship, and so kept denouncing him in such indignant tones that the elder finally begged his pardon, and apologised humbly for his uncalled for attack. The elder and he were friends again, and the captain, when he visited the Cigar Divan in the evening, expecting to hear of the terrible row, which he had no doubt would be ended on the friend apologising, was astonished to find that it was the elder who had apologised, and when told that the reason of the change was caused by his being impeached as the greatest of liars in Ayr, he was rather crestfallen. The pith of this story is much lost in the telling. If the parties who were the dramatis personæ were known, its richness would be more appreciated. I find many other stories of a similar kind, but I must ascertain if there will be any serious objections to their being told.

CHAPTER XXX.

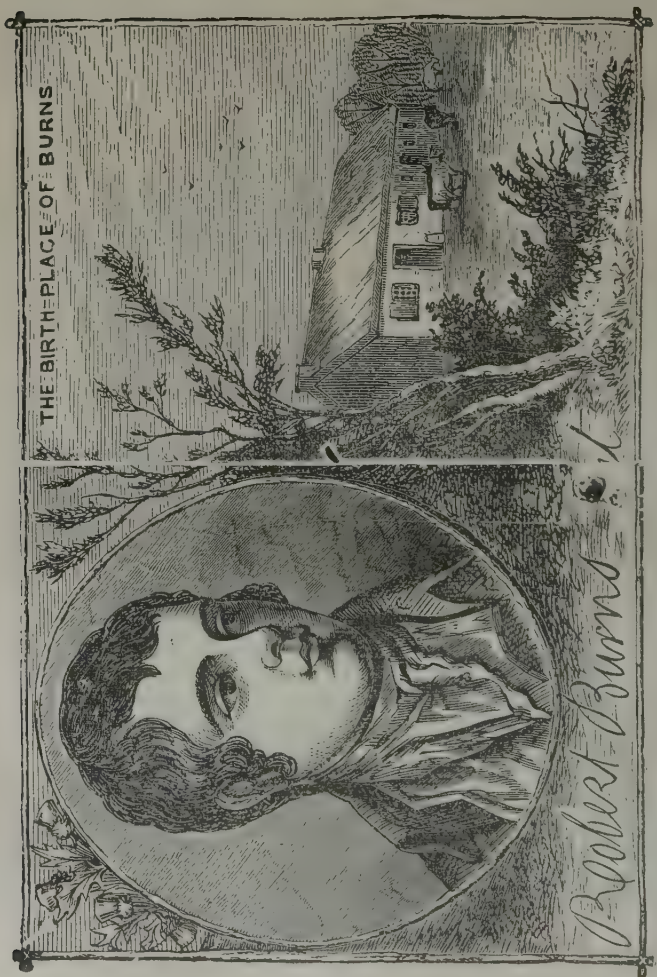
BURNS' COTTAGE AND MONUMENT.

What Burns of the "Memory of Burns" has done for Ayr will always be a matter of dispute. The vicinity of the Cottage and Monument has been the means of popularising the "auld toun" and bringing thousands of visitors from all quarters of the globe, who have all left more or less money in the town and so enriched its merchants. The fact of its being the centre of the Land of Burns has given Ayr a position it would not otherwise have had, and certainly without these visitors and the Alloway attractions Ayr would have been a much poorer place. On the other hand, some will maintain that these visitors are to some extent a nuisance and do injury, crowding our streets in a rowdy fashion, and injuring the town in the eyes of many who would otherwise favour it and do it more good. Exclusiveness is at the bottom of this. The same parties would enclose the Cottage and Monument and reserve them for a privileged few. It lies with the authorities to make arrangements for trippers so that they will be no nuisance, and provide attraction, and, if necessary, shelter on wet days, which would do all the good to the town, which one expects from them without forming any drawbacks to it. Things have now much changed since the middle of the last century in the surroundings of the Cottage and Monument. At that time the Cottage was the property of the Shoemakers Incorporation, and was let as a public-house. The Monument was left very much to take care of itself, and was by no means such an attraction as it is now. The Burns Monument Inn was also a public-house, where, Sunday as well as week-day, anyone who was not very particular about the quality of his liquor could get "fou" on very easy terms, though he could not quite so easily recover from the effects of it. Sunday evening at the Monument, even in those days when more respect was paid to the Sabbath than now, was sometimes more like a saturnalia, and certainly would not be tolerated now. Greenfield Avenue and Longfield Avenue were the favourite walks, which they are still; and Cunningham's "up the Brae," and Gowkscroft were favourite resorts for fruit, of which many partook on their Sunday night walk. The advant of Forbes-Mackenzie did away with Sunday drinking to a very great extent at the Monument Hotel, and the purchase of Burns Cottage by the Monument Trustees, who abolished the license, did

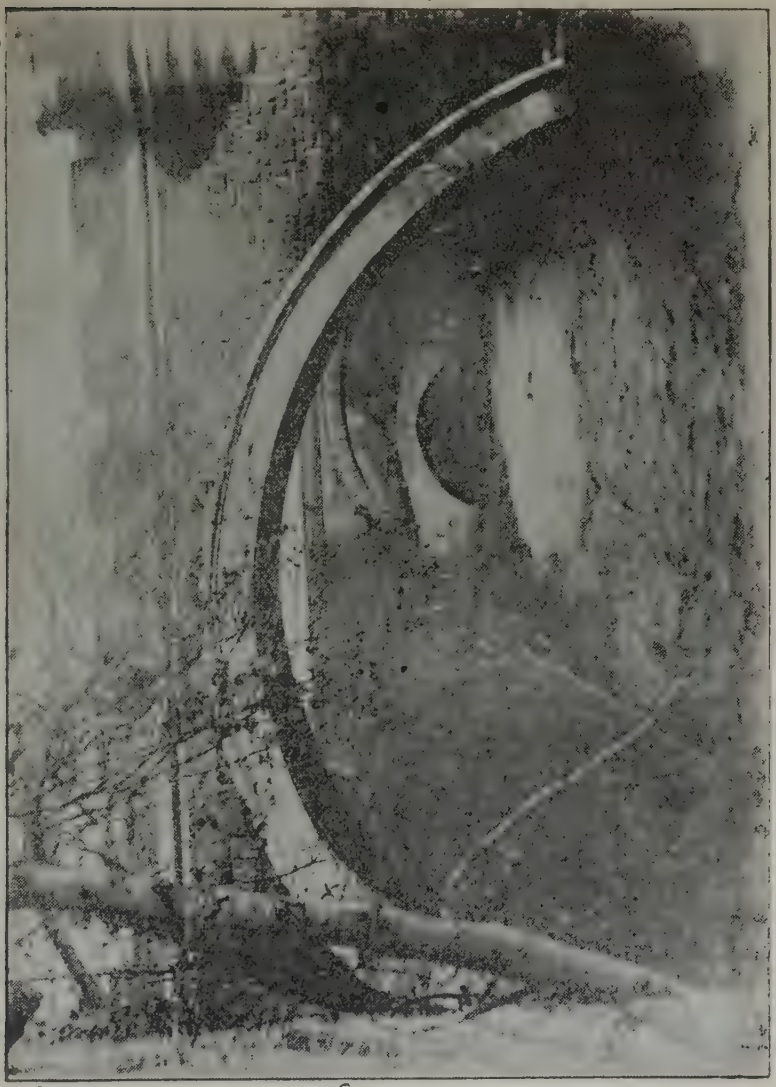
much to improve matters. I date the improvement which has taken place in Alloway from the time the Cottage was taken over by the Trustees, and the rowdyism removed, which used to characterise the neighbourhood on Sundays and Fast Days. This rowdyism was as much caused by people from Ayr as by visitors from a distance. Trippers then did not number hundreds for the thousands we have now, nor was the neighbourhood so well worthy of a visit. We sang of the "Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," but neither the banks, the hotel, the Monument, nor the Cottage, were at all to be compared to the delightful state in which they are now kept. The whole district is transformed. There were occasional hires to the Monument, but more generally it was a pedestrian visit, finishing with a drink if the weather was cold to impart some heat, or if the weather was warm even the doubtful quality of the whisky or beer did not prevent these being taken to impart a coolness. The birthplace of Burns at the time I speak of, certainly was one of Ayr's attractions, but, as in many things yet, Ayr had not wakened up to turn these attractions to the best account. It may be said of Burns that he is the great exception to the rule, that a prophet is without honour in his country. Scotsmen abroad may be more enthusiastic over the poet, still Ayr, Alloway, Ayrshire, in fact, has given him all due honour. The foundation stone of his monument on the banks of the Doon was laid with Masonic honours in 1820 on the poet's birthday, in a manner worthy of the great occasion. Again, in 1844, a Burns festival was held, which far eclipsed any celebration ever held in Ayr. A procession was formed, the leading portion of which reached the Monument when the last of it was leaving Ayr. Again, in 1859, the centenary of the poet's birth was celebrated with as much spirit as it was in all places over the world. A grand procession, a banquet in the County Hall, another in the Town Buildings, and another in Burns' Cottage, all of which were attended by men of note, and speeches were delivered anywhere on that occasion. Probably that of the Rev. Hately Waddell, who presided at the Cottage banquet, will always rank as one of the finest tributes ever paid the poet's genius.

Natives of Ayr, even the proverbial oldest inhabitants, will always associate the Auld Toon with Burns. With them THE Cottage, THE Monument, and THE Auld Brig are always the most definite of articles. All other cottages, monuments, and brigs must have a name associated with them, otherwise they are indefinite; but Burns, THE Poet, has given to each a position which does not require Ayr

to be prefixed or alluded to in any way. In our school days our patriotism was perhaps more roused by allusions to Wallace and Bruce than to Burns. We thought more of fighting than poetry, and we claimed Wallace and Bruce as Ayrshire men. We would like to have claimed Wellington and Nelson as well, but our poetic souls as we grew older went over completely to Burns, and we gave the palm to the author of "Scots Wha Hae" more than to the Wallace who bled, and the Bruce who led. Sixty years ago there were those who shook their heads over Burns as being "nae better than he should be," and there were those who would not join in the centenary celebrations, and looked upon "Willie brewed a peck o' Maut" and "The Barley Brae" as songs of debauchery, and "Holy Willie's Prayer" and "The Holy Fair" as downright profanity. We are older now, and possibly and probably wiser. New Editions of Burns are being called for, and we are more inclined to revise the Confession of Faith than revise even the most harum-scarum of Burns effusions. Certainly we take as worthy of all commendation the improvements now being effected at the Monument and the Cottage. With great gladness we see the banks and braes made really bonnie, and as a further instance of our veneration for all connected with Burns, and indeed the world-wide interest taken in him, the possible falling of the Auld Brig has received so much attention as to save it, not so much as a brig, but because Burns "Twa Brigs" has immortalised it. The same spirit which animates a few who would willingly renew our Auld Brig at present was shown in 1816, when the new Brig of Doon at the Monument Hotel was built. The auld brig, whose keystone was reached by Tam o' Shanter when pursued by the hellish legion, saving himself and his mare, all except the tail, narrowly escaped destruction at the time this new bridge was built, having been disposed of as old material to the contractor. The following petition by the Rev. Hamilton Paul, which was printed and widely circulated throughout the country, had the merit of calling forth an immediate subscription to repurchase the bridge; but this was not necessary, the Trustees having consented to cancel the bargain:—



From an Old Plate of 1820.



THE THREE BRIGS O' DOON

Auld Brig o' Doon.

"Must I, like modern fabrics of a day,
Decline, unwept, the victim of decay?
Shall my bold arch, which proudly stretches o'er
Doon's classic stream from Kyle to Carrick shore,
Be suffered in oblivion's gulf to fall,
And hurl to wreck my venerable wall?
Forbid it, every tutelary power
That guards my key-stone at a midnight hour;
Forbid it ye, who, charmed at Burns' lay,
Amid those scenes can linger out the day.
Let Nanny's sark and Maggie's mangled tail
Plead in my cause, and in that cause prevail.
The man of taste who comes my form to see,
And curious asks, but asks in vain for me,
With tears of sorrow will my fate deplore,
When he is told the Auld Brig is no more.
Stop, then! O stop the more than vandal rage
That marks this revolutionary age;
And bid the structure of your fathers last,
The pride of this, the boast of ages past;
Nor ever let your children's children tell
By your decree the fine old fabric fell."

It would indeed have been a terrible pity had the Auld Brig o' Doon been removed. It remains yet one of the most attractive features of the landscape. Every improvement added to the locality only adds to its attractiveness and value. The photograph recently taken of the Canadian bowlers on the occasion of their visit to Ayr was much enhanced in value by having the Auld Brig as a background. The span of its arch is perfect, and in the situation it occupies in such surroundings the want of it would be simply lamentable. A new bridge certainly was necessary. Happily this was carried out without the removal of the old. The one indeed requires the other to complete the picture and enhance the attractiveness of the Monument and the Hotel Gardens, now so handsomely completed. Indeed, the scene as far as bridges are concerned, has been further beautified by another bridge erected by the Railway which, so far from injuriously affecting the amenity of the district, has even added to its charms. The Auld Brig gives us a fine specimen of the arches of 500 years ago, while the new railway bridge is a good specimen of that of the twentieth century. A fine picture of the three brigs can now be had in one of Mr Roddie's pictorial card series, happily conceived and produced by Mr Johnstone of Alloway, and though an amateur production will compare favourably with professional efforts just as we often see an apprentice's work exhibiting more ingenuity than that of the journeyman. If a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon fifty or sixty years ago could be spent here pleasantly, how much more attractive is it now, and "what it shall hereafter be" if the same management is continued is difficult to conceive. It was a great attraction fifty years ago, but now the change is marvellous, and yet it will not be surprising if a more marvellous change is yet before us. Visitors are increasing by thousands every year, and the small charge of twopence for entrance to the Cottage and Monument respectively brings in a large sum annually. This is all expended in improvements and additions. It is not too much to expect that the grounds around the Cottage will be extended, and a tea garden as attractive as that at the Doon made to increase its revenue. The ground around the Monument also may be extended greatly, and surround the new Alloway Church, making it even more attractive, and, instead of being the drawback it was at one time feared it would be, be an added beauty. The Auld Kirk, in itself a great attraction, may also become more so, and if the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company give us a railway station here on the same lines as their bridge over the Doon, the place will be still the land of Burns,

and the Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon, and I should say almost glorified. Nothing of any value has been removed which added to the attractiveness of the place. Even the shell palace has been retained in the grounds, a memorial of ingenious perseverance and good taste. The tasteful grotto containing the statues of Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnny, which commanded the admiration of our youth as well as of our more mature years, is still here, and will continue to be admired, no matter to what extent other attractions are added to the surroundings. It is questionable if the greatest sculptor of modern days has given us anything better, certainly nothing more natural. Burns' greatest poem is worthy of the statues, and the statues are worthy of his greatest poem. The Cottage, the Monument, the Hotel, the Auld Kirk, are all the centre of a most attractive District which always has been and still is one of the finest in the finest country of the world.

Would the traveller see the Land of Burns at one glance in all its breadth and fairness let him find his way across the New Bridge, past the hotel and up Brown Carrick Hill, the view from which is one of the finest that is anywhere to be met with; and the hill itself is not the least picturesque of the objects in the scenery which we are about to describe.

It forms the south-western boundary of the vale in which Ayr is situated, rising with a swelling acclivity to the height of several hundred feet above the level of the plain below, and abruptly terminating in prominent projecting headlands that form the western point of the beautiful bay, which will ere long demand our attention. The vale of Ayr is bounded on all its other sides, except towards the sea, by gently undulating hills, clothed with a rich luxuriance of crops and pasture, and it terminates at a considerable distance towards the north, in the far-projecting coast of Cunninghame. Along the coast are distinctly to be seen on a clear day, whitening in the sunshine, the thriving towns of Ardrossan, Stevenston, Saltcoats, Kilwinning, and Irvine, which give interest and variety to the scene, and convey the idea of a district teeming with animation, wealth, and industry. But confining our view to the landscape in the immediate vicinity of Ayr, nothing can be more picturesque and beautiful, more cheerful and attractive, more productive of interesting recollections, than the scenery and localities which surround it. It is, perhaps, one of the finest districts of Ayrshire, and the land that is not under plantations is cultivated and dressed like a garden. At a distance to the east are the dense and extensive woods of Craigie, with the elegant mansion house towering above the trees, and standing on a fine sloping bank, close by the

water of Ayr, which here assumes the form of a considerable river, in consequence of the dam formed immediately below—instead of (as the poet describes) "gurgling and kissing its pebbled bed." Close by Craigie is the beautiful seat of Castlehill, with its fine plantations, situated on a commanding eminence above the town, and having a most extensive view of the bay and surrounding scenery. In association with it, we are led to recall the memory of Mr Peter Ballantine, who built the house and formed the plantation around it—and also of his brother John, who, as we have already said, was long at the head of municipal affairs of the burgh, to whom it was principally indebted for the erection of its New Bridge and its far-famed Academy. Almost contiguous to the plantations of Castlehill is the secluded retreat of Belmont, nearly hid among the trees with which it is surrounded. Next to it, at a short distance beyond, towards the south, lies the beautiful domain of Doonholm, stretching along the banks of the Doon. This was formerly the residence of Mr John Fergusson, who, by his own most enlightened and liberal-minded exertions in the mercantile world, made a princely fortune in India, and left a magnificent bequest of £3000 to the ministers, the poor, and the teachers of the town of Ayr—£1000 to each class. It was this latter sum to the teachers that formed the germ out of which the Academy sprung. Along with these, we enumerate the house of Belleisle, erected by the late Mr Hamilton of Pinmore in the old English baronial turretted style, the elegant mansion of Mountcharles, with the handsome mansion house of Doonside, erected by Mr Dunlop, and the more recently erected Seafield House, built by Sir Wm. Arrol, all surrounded with extensive plantations, which nearly adjoin each other, together with places of less prominence such as Corsehill, Rosebank, and many elegant villas with which the vicinity of Ayr is ornamented. We are justified in repeating that the lower part of the parishes of Ayr and Alloway is, perhaps, the best wooded district in the county, and presents a view from Carrick Hill above it which is hardly anywhere surpassed. On our left hand we have within a few hundred yards of us Newark Castle. Viewed from the road, it presents the appearance of a comfortably airily-designed manor house, with little or nothing of the character of an old stronghold about it. Further west, on the northern boundary of Carrick Hill, projecting themselves twenty feet on high, are two or three precipitous rocks, known as the Heads of Ayr. At the very verge of the northernmost of these, and seemingly held back by the frailest tenure from toppling over into the deep, stands Greenan Castle, the ancient seat of the Kennedys.

One more attraction is still wanted, which would not only be an advantage to Ayr, but a great convenience to all visitors to the land of Burns. The felt want we refer to is a large Hotel or Hydropathic Establishment. A building of 100 bedrooms, and other accommodation, erected on the banks of the Doon, in the vicinity of what has been immortalised by the Poet, would prove a splendid investment, as it would be frequented by thousands from all quarters of the globe, as well as many nearer Ayr, who would gladly spend a week or two in the Land of Burns, to enjoy its scenery, and revel in its classic attractions. This has frequently been spoken of; let us hope than any one who can will give a helping hand to have the scheme carried out.

Few more attractive sites for palatial residences can be found than around the "Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," with the County Town as the centre of the district, and open spaces like the Racecourse, the Low Green, and the sea beach in the vicinity. These will likely soon be taken up, but a grand Marine Hotel or Hydropathic, somewhere in the neighbourhood, would be largely taken advantage of as well. To the north of the town, also, there is Prestwick, rapidly becoming a town of villas, with the advantages of its links and open spaces, attracting golfers from all parts of the kingdom. First-rate boarding accommodation is also wanted here, for though Prestwick certainly has made great strides of late, it is a wonder, with such attractions and cheap feuing ground, more has not been made of it. Ayr, however, has evidently come upon another of those periods when its extension will go on by leaps and bounds, and in a few years the extended Burgh will have its radius enlarged and enclosed by the River Doon on the South and the Pow Burn on the north, thereby including Prestwick and Alloway within its boundaries, the tramway giving a cheap and convenient mode of communication to all districts within these enlarged boundaries.

We may mention here that the foregoing chapter appeared in the "Ayr Observer" in 1904, and of course many changes have taken place since that time, such as the Alloway Tea Gardens and the alteration of the whole district by the Railway. In a concluding chapter to these Reminiscences we may notice the great changes which have taken place not only here but all around Ayr. The intention in the meantime is to reprint from the columns of the "Observer" these chapters of Reminiscences as they appeared, and as illustrating the changes which have taken place we give in the following pages examples to indicate the progress which is being made.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Burns Clubs.

Following the chapter on Burns Cottage and Monument it is only reasonable to expect that another may be devoted to Burns Clubs. These annually celebrate on the 25th of January the great anniversary, a celebration which each year is increasing in intensity, and readers of Reminiscences of Auld Ayr will turn back to the time when Burns Clubs were almost in their infancy. It is difficult to say for a certainty which was the first Burns Club; their name now is legion. Wherever the English language is spoken (I mean Scottish, of course) there you will find a Burns Club. The sun never sets on the British Empire, and in every part of the Empire you find a Scot. I believe even one Scot would found a Burns Club, for he would find others all claiming more or less of a Scotch connection or extraction and all would be admirers of the Scottish bard, hence there would arise a Burns Club and to a certainty a celebration of the 25th. Greenock, I understand, puts forward a claim to be the first town which formed a Burns Club. I rather like the spirit of emulation which makes every one aim at having a special claim to pre-eminence in connection with the poet, hence I have a kindly feeling towards Greenock for the pride it takes in maintaining its claim. As, however, to put Greenock first in this respect would be a stigma on Ayr, I am not inclined tamely to yield the honours. It would be strange indeed if the birthplace of the poet should so far have forgotten itself as to allow any other place to take precedence in commemoration of the bard. It is ancient history now the formation of the first Burns Clubs. The "Observer" has always taken an interest in all pertaining to them, but no notice of the formation of the first club can be found in its columns; for, even in 1832 the year in which the "Observer" first saw the light—there were Burns Clubs in existence. The progenitor of the "Observer," however—"The Ayr and Wigtownshire Courier" goes further back, and I find that a Mr John Goldie or Goudie, for some time editor of that paper, was the founder of the first Ayr and Alloway Burns Club. This was undoubtedly the first real Burns Club. There were Edinburgh, Ayrshire, and other clubs in existence, and to them more than to the Burns Clubs we are indebted for much that associated Burns with his native county and assisted to form Burns Clubs elsewhere.

Strange to say, it is not to these clubs, which became numerous early in the nineteenth century, that we owe the more enduring memorials of Burns. Individuals, more than Burns Clubs, have reared the monuments and gather together the relics which have now become so valuable. The "feast of reason and the flow of soul," especially on the 25th, has always been the main characteristic of the clubs associated with his name.

It may not be generally known that the cenotaph which rears its graceful proportions on the "Banks and braes o' bonnie Doon," beautifying as far as art can the garden of Burns's farm, was the creation of the late Sir Alexander Boswell, and is a trophy of his perseverance. It was at his suggestion, and mainly through his instrumentality, that "repentant Scotland" thus did homage to the genius of her peerless poet. The story of what proved, under his guidance, a successful national movement, is eminently characteristic of the iron will by which it was led. Its inauguration looked such a ludicrous and disgraceful failure that the scheme must have failed still-born in less energetic hands. To the invitations issued for the preliminary public meeting in Ayr, there was only one response. But the empty benches could not freeze a zeal at white heat. Sir Alexander took the chair, constituted his solitary auditor secretary, and proposed resolutions that it was desirable to perpetuate the memory of the Bard in some tangible form, etc., etc., which were of course adopted nem con—the proceedings terminating with a vote of thanks to the chairman, moved by the improvised clerk! A minute was duly drawn up, signed officially by the two enthusiasts, and advertised in all the local and leading newspapers. Publicity at once wafted the enterprise into popular favour, committees were organised, and subscriptions flowed plenteously in, till the fund reached an aggregate of £3,330. On 25th January, 1820, Sir Alexander, as Depute Grand Master Mason for Ayrshire, laid the foundation stone of the edifice, supported by all the Masonic Lodges in the Province and surrounded by a vast concourse of spectators.

Next to the perfervid oration he then delivered, perhaps the best tribute to the genius of Burns was that of the late Lord Ardmillan, a distinguished judge of the Court of Session, and a native of the County. The occasion was a dinner of the Edinburgh Ayrshire Society, which took place in the Queen's Rooms, into which the old theatre in Fort Street had recently been converted. The large hall was packed, and Lord Ardmillan occupied the chair. After dinner and the formal toasts had been disposed of, his Lordship proposed the "Immortal Memory." With his

face slightly upraised, and eyes shut as if to exclude outside influences with his thoughts, he simply warbled about the poet. He did not omit Burns' satire, and made reference to his visit to the Houses of Parliament, and, with much humour, gave this quotation:—

"He clenched his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist,
His argument he tint it;
He gaped for't, he graiped for't,
He fand it was awa', man;
But what his common sense came short,
He eked it out wi' law, man."

At the conclusion of this quotation his Lordship brought his right hand down with a thump on the table, the effect of which was electrical and the enthusiasm unbounded. The result was a large accession to the membership of the Society.

As I have already mentioned, the first Burns Club was formed by Mr John Goldie, or Goudie, who was one of the chief assistants Sir Alexander Boswell had in the erection of the Burns Monument, now the land mark to guide the increasing pilgrims to the venerable Kirk Allowa'. That club continued with a lively existence down to shortly before the "Cottage" ceased to be a licensed property. The members were mostly of the better or literary class, and the club was kept very select. They met annually on the 25th of January in the Cottage where the Bard was born and held their carousal. It is undoubted that these were the days of hard drinking, which was continued by some after the anniversary for some days. The fact of their meeting within the sacred precincts of the place which gave birth to the Poet, of Ayrshire, but now, through his singing humanity, claimed by the world at large, doubtless added to their enthusiasm. Many distinguished men presided at these anniversaries, and—as was the rule from the Chair—delivered magnificent speeches in proposing "The Immortal Memory." Under the auspices of the Ayr Burns Club the centenary was celebrated in the Cottage under the chairmanship of the Rev. Hately Waddel, whose speech on that occasion was unsurpassed at any of the numerous meetings held that night. Not to go too far back, I recollect also the marvellous tributes of the Rev. Wm. Buchanan, a former editor of the "Observer," and the late Mr Robert Goudie, Sheriff Clerk. The latter was one of the most earnest students of Burns I ever met, and in

his speeches about Burns, or toasts to the "Memory," he was simply entrancing, bringing into relief and shadow all the best attributes of the unfortunate genius. I think Mr Goudie must have been a descendant of the Mr Goldie, or Goudie, already referred to. Our then Sheriff Clerk's fame as a Burns exponent spread far, and one result was that he and the late Mr John Pollock, Town Clerk, were invited as guests of the famous Edinburgh Ninety Burns Club. Any one who has knowledge of the modern Athens and its inhabitants will know something of the "selectness" and severely high standard of criticism. Mr Goudie was asked to propose "The Immortal Memory," and, as Mr Pollock afterwards remarked, he simply took the "quid nuncs" by storm and electrified all. The late Mr Robert Howie Smith, editor of the "Ayrshire Express," Mr Walker Stewart, Mr Wm. M'Naught, writer, and others too numerous to specify, were the leading lights and active in the then club's affairs. As I have said the club expired naturally. The membership was restricted to suit the accommodation of the Cottage. The present Ayr Burns Club is a recent creation and its legitimate successor with the membership unlimited, and the annual meetings held in Ayr.

The fact that the old club could meet and celebrate the poet's anniversary within the walls of the "Auld Clay Biggin'" is only equalled in Burns history by "The Jolly Beggars" Burns Club meeting, as they do now, and have for many years, in "Poosie Nansie's Hostelry, Mauchline, the Jolly Beggars Howf," where Burns saw that gathering o' gangrel bodies, the result of which was the composition of his famous cantata—shrewed and penetrating, might we say dissecting—as to the ways and beings of human life, "The Jolly Beggars."

As Mr Goldie or Goudie, one of our natives, was himself a poet of no minor degree, we give the following pathetic piece selected from a published book of his works:—

The Foundling.

When sick or wae the puir man's wean
Ken's that a mither's smile is sweet,
The joyless orphan left alane
Abin' a faither's grave can greet;

Sic bless, alake, is no fur me,
For ne'er has't been my lot to prove
How sweet's the blink o' mither's e'e,
How warm the glow o' faither's love.

My birth—night saw me at yon door—
The cauld, cauld yird, my cradle's place,
And winter's snafs were driftin' ower
My sichtless e'en an' tender face;
December's blasts was blawin' chill,
An' caul' an' nippin' was the air—
The mither's heart wis caulder still
That laid her sinless baby there!

The han' that fed an' cled wis kin',
An' aye shall be richt dear tae me,
But warmer love I fain wid ken
Than warmest gratitude can be.
A mither's love I fain would share,
For oh! this heart to love was made,
Wid hear a faither's e'enin' prayer
Ca' heaven's blessings on my head.

When joined wi' younkers at their play
I whiles forget a mither's wrang,
But when the weet or closin' day
Gars ilka playmate hameward gang;
Oh! then I fin' my bosom swell,
Wi' feelin's that it lang has nurst,
And yearn a parent's love to feel,
Till whiles I think my he'rt will burst.

When seated by the ingle side
Some neebours blithsome weans I see,
While luiks that speak a faither's pride
Are beaming frae their faither's e'e;
I strive to chock the bursting sigh,
An' dicht awa' the burnin' tear,
Syne luik upon yon gowden sky,
An' hope I hae a faither there.

Any one who professes to have a heart and soul will surely admit that these lines by a native who founded the first Burns Club are worthy of reproduction.

Five and twenty days have well nigh run, and the blasts o' January win' of 1905 have as usual brought about the natal day, and as usual the "Immortal Memory" will be pledged over the world by Burns Clubs, with no diminution of fervour. Ayr appropriately honours his memory under the presidency of its chief magistrate, with its Member of Parliament proposing the toast. We also find history to some extent repeating itself by the Jolly Beggars securing the sheriff clerk depute for the speech of the evening. To th relics at the Cottage we would add copies of the orations delivered on this occasion. Even the minute books of the clubs would be valuable, especially in after years, when Burns Clubs are more numerous than they are now. Very possibly some of the early minute books of the Ayr and Alloway Club have found their way, as highly valuable mementoes, over the Atlantic. The tide seemingly has turned, and these records of old associations are now being kept nearer home.

The foregoing chapter appeared in the "Ayr Observer" of 1905. As still further marking the progress of time we give the "Note on Current Topics" which appeared in January, 1907, as bearing on the changes connected with what we may call Burns Brigs.

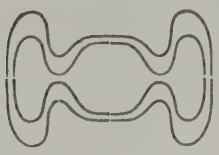
The 25th of January.

"The celebration of the 25th of January, and the toasting of 'The Immortal Memory' will be more remarkable in the year 1907 for allusions to the river Ayr than the 'Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon.' The Auld Brig o' Ayr will be more taken notice of than the Brig immortalised by Tam o' Shanter, and Auld Ayr will certainly take precedence of Alloway. Prophesy having been fulfilled, the New Brig has been rebuilt, but the Auld Brig has also shown unmistakeable signs of the same fate befalling it. An appeal to Lord Rosebery to come to the rescue has had the desired effect of bringing his Lordship out as a "Jolly Beggar" with such success that it is evident the contributions to be given to-night will fully realise the amount required to restore the Auld Brig and render it sound for

several years to come. Lord Rosebery has not only been the means of securing the preservation of the Auld Brig at this time, but by his eloquence and his efforts he has given Ayr an advertisement which will increase its popularity as a resort to an extent it never enjoyed before. The celebration of the natal day this year will, therefore, only add to this increased popularity of Ayr. Burns clubs over the world will be placing the Auld Brig o' Ayr alongside the Auld Clay Biggin', the Cottage, the Monument, the Banks and Braes, in importance, and in future we may rest assured Auld Ayr will still be held in prominence, but also the Auld Brig will more than ever be kept to the front. I hope the result of the appeal which has been made to all Burns Clubs will be an honour to his memory and be to the credit of those who profess admiration for him. A tithe of the money expended to-night in celebrating the anniversary would give us the required sum to do all that is necessary in the way of restoration. (As our readers are aware the money has now been satisfactorily raised.) The Auld Brig thus restored, the question arises, What is to be done with the £10,000 already in hand to build another bridge? The handsome legacy left by Mr Templeton for that purpose will surely never be thrown away. We are told that sound legal opinion has been obtained that this money cannot be used for repairing the old. May I ask what is the value of a legal opinion even from a very high authority, if from an equally high authority—perhaps higher—another opinion may be had exactly opposite? The money is in the possession of the Town Council, and they are in duty bound to see that it is devoted to the purpose for which Mr Templeton intended it. There is no mistaking that intention. He did not wish to pull down the Auld Brig. He had too much veneration for it for that. He provided for all the relations whom he wished to benefit, and beyond that he clearly foresaw a time when the present Auld Brig would be inadequate to provide for the traffic of an increasing town like Ayr, and he forthwith provided the means of erecting a bridge which would do so. Perhaps the word chosen to represent his intention does not accurately represent his meaning, but it requires no great stretch of imagination for the word 'rebuild' to mean such words as 'replace,' 'erect another,' or more simply still, just say 'build' a bridge, not necessarily on the same spot, but alongside of, or within a reasonable distance. Ayr requires this. It would be a decided advantage and improvement to have it, and the money is there to do it. And why not? In the future the Auld Brig of Ayr will be much more than ever one of the chief attractions of the place. What an

advantage then would it be to have another bridge similar to the Victoria Bridge built alongside of it, from which it could be more advantageously seen and which would to some extent protect it. The same access from the north side would serve both bridges, but on the south side a new access would have to be given in every way better than the one we have at present, and more in line with High Street. Ayr just now has a chance of carrying out an improvement at very little cost to the town, which it may never have again, and one of the best things the Burns Clubs have ever done would be to complete the fund required to carry it out. Many Burns monuments have been erected by Burns Clubs, but never one in which utility and sentiment have alike been more considered than in restoring the Auld Brig and in erecting a new one beside it, making a monument most complete to the memory of the author of the 'Twa Brigs.'"

As these Reminiscences draw to a close we add a few chapters, still further to illustrate what Ayr was half a century ago and what it is now. Railways, as already mentioned, have caused many changes and are still doing so. The new Racecourse will also add to these changes, and a notice of the old Racecourse cannot be omitted; while a few other subjects have still to be added to give something approaching completion to these Reminiscences, which appearing, we may say, in serial form, are somewhat disconnected. But even patch-work may be made to harmonise.



CHAPTER XXXII.

Railway Enterprise.

We have enterprising individuals, enterprising companies, enterprising municipalities, and enterprising railways. Strange to say, the three former are highly commended, while the last mentioned are hampered, often prevented, and always opposed by some one, and every obstacle thrown in the way of having their schemes realised. An individual is applauded when he undertakes some extension of his business. A company also—either limited or co-operative—is complimented in the same way. A municipality, highly progressive and keeping abreast of the times, receives all honour. The authorities are praised, and if they are not entertained to public dinners and awarded premiums for their enterprise they have it always in their power to entertain themselves, and adopt not unpleasant measures to see about them. Railway companies alone are hindered in all their attempts, and are met by opponents in every direction in every attempt to be considered enterprising. Why it should be so is not very plain. If an individual or a company attempts to run motor cars to any place the individual or the company can do so, and they are applauded for their enterprise, or if they should run steamers to any port the same commendation is awarded them, but let a railway company try it. They must first of all have a Parliamentary bill, which is in all probability opposed, and sometimes thrown out. I can quite understand municipal bodies being treated in the same way. They are elected for special objects, and not to enter into competition probably with their own constituents. They have to watch, clean, light, and attend to roads and footpaths, and provide a supply of water, but there their duties are ended. They have no right to enter into competition with any individual or company in providing food, for instance, or any of the necessaries of life. Theirs is not a business concern. Mercantile affairs can be left with safety to ratepayers, who are not expected to provide means for those who represent them to become their rivals. Railway companies, however, are mercantile concerns to provide facilities for public travelling, and should very reasonably be left to manage their own affairs, which it it their interest to make as effective as possible, as by doing so they are sure to reap the best return. It comes within their province to provide steamers—say from Ayr to Arran—this

being only a continuation of the journey from Glasgow to Arran. Even for this, though, they have to obtain Parliamentary powers. The have even to obtain such powers to use motor cars from any of their stations to neighbouring villages, though this also seems to be only a continuation of a journey which legitimately comes within their province to enable travellers to complete their journey. The most recent development of railway facilities in the neighbourhood of Ayr is the Dunure and Maidens Light Railway to Girvan. Why it should be called a light railway is a mystery, as it seems as substantial as any railway in existence, and the engines and carriages to be run on it are to be the same as are presently running between Ayr and Glasgow, but that it will be of the greatest importance and advantage to Ayr goes without saying, and we can only hope that in return for the enterprise of the company it will prove remunerative to them. Hitherto a drive along the Carrick shore has been a most expensive luxury, but now a railway convenience at a fifth of the cost carries us even more comfortably. The Maidens and Turnberry, hitherto almost inaccessible, will now be brought within easy distance, and a most delightful afternoon can be spent which till now was never thought of. We have now great pleasure in giving an anticipation of this new line which is so soon to be opened. It must necessarily be of great interest to all our readers, opening up as it does a more delightful run between Ayr and Girvan than we already have, and the increased traffic between the two places must be of the greatest importance to all concerned. The following describes the line which will be known as the

MAIDENS AND DUNURE LIGHT RAILWAY.

The new branch line of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway between Ayr and Girvan, via the coast, breaks off the main line about a mile and three-quarters south of Ayr and strikes west towards Alloway. Immediately after leaving the main line the farm of Mount Oliphant may be seen to the left, a residence of Burns in his early days. The first stop is at Alloway Station, where a commodious station is being built to accommodate large excursion parties, and which is immediately opposite "Alloway's auld haunted kirk," and bounded on one side by the Monument, while five minutes' walk towards Ayr brings us to Burns' Cottage. Leaving Alloway Station the line passes through a covered way about 100 yards long, emerging again on the banks of the Doon which it crosses on a very handsome viaduct of four arches. Looking from the train here, the traveller

will see one of the prettiest bits of river scenery to be seen in a district famous for its beautiful streams. Looking up stream may be seen the old bridge of Doon, which is a beautiful specimen of the bridge-builder's art in the "good old days," while nearer is the new bridge of Doon, which was built in 1816, and so is also of quite a respectable age. To the right in the policies of Cambusdoon will be seen Mungo's Well, of which mention is made in "Tam o' Shanter." The line now heads for the coast, running close to Longhill Avenue for a short distance and rising gradually until the sea comes into view for the first time. From here a fine view is obtained of Ayr and the coast north of it, as far as Stevenston. Here also will be seen the old keep of Greenan Castle, keeping silent watch over the sea, about a quarter of a mile from the railway. The railway now passes under the Dunure road and sweeps round in a southerly direction, when very soon the Heads of Ayr come into prominence, rising sheer almost from the waters edge for over 100 feet and pierced by numerous caves, while to the landward side the ground slopes gently down to Heads of Ayr Station, our next stop. The bay to the south of the Heads has been for many years a favourite spot for picnics, and a road leads directly from the station to it. Leaving Heads of Ayr the train goes labouring up a steep bank and enters a cut in the rock, emerging on the level again when a magnificent panorama is unfolded to the view. Looking to the north, the hills of Cowal, the Cumbraes and Bute, and on a clear day the mountains of Argyleshire rising behind them may be seen, besides the whole of the north of Ayrshire coast, dotted with towns and villages; while to the west is Ardlamont, Skipness, and Arran in its purple beauty. To the south again is south-end of Kintyre, Sanda, and very often a long low lying strip of the Irish coast may be seen, giving the whole the appearance of a vast lake. Ailsa Craig also comes into view here for the first time and gets clearer as the train goes south. So clear is the air here that on a good day the houses in Whiting Bay in Arran may be quite easily picked out, although about twenty miles away. The next halt, Dunure, the station for which stands in the scattered village of Fisherton, where is a school and church, while ten minutes walk brings us to the old world hamlet of Dunure and Port Rorie, with its quaint harbour, at some seasons filled with fishing boats and quays filled with gear. Immediately south of the harbour stands the ruins of Dunure Castle, a most interesting old pile rising from the very edge of the low cliff, an ancient residence of a branch of the Kennedy family, the chief of whom in former times held such sway

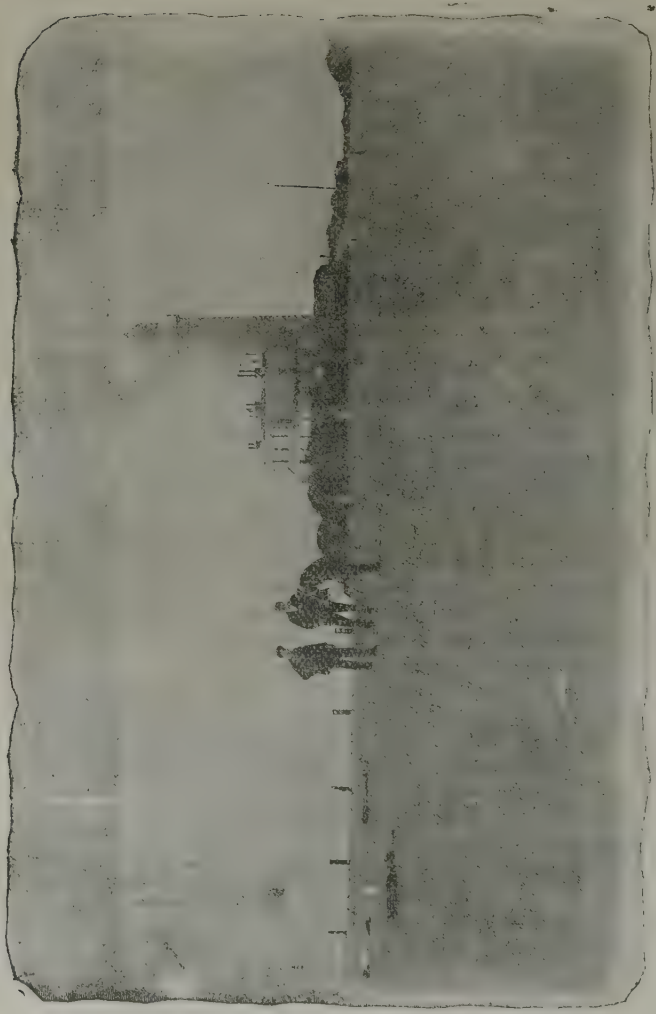
in the Carrick district as to give rise to the popular rhyme—

"Twixt Wigton and the town of Air,
Portpatrick and the Cruives of Cree,
No man need think for to bide there
Unless he court Saint Kennedie."

Here it was, legend has it, that a Kennedy put on the Commendator of Crossraguel Abbey to roast so that he was forced to hand over certain funds of the Abbey to his tormentor. To the east of the station is another ancient stronghold, Dunduff Castle, a grim, square tower standing on the hillside. Shortly after leaving Dunure, Culzean Castle, the residence of the Marquess of Ailsa, the "Saint Kennedie" of to-day comes into view across the beautiful Culzean Bay. The castle, which, like all the castles along the shore here stands on the edge of a sheer cliff, is for a good part of fairly modern date as castles go in this part of the country, but some of it is at least 400 years old. The line presently passes over Cloy Glen, a picturesque gorge, by a fine steel viaduct supported on concrete piers, while about a mile further on another deep ravine is encountered—namely, Ransleugh Glen, which is also negotiated by means of a magnificent viaduct of very similar construction to that of Croy Glen, but of much greater proportions, the length being about 600 feet, while the rails are laid at a height of over 130 feet from the burn at the bottom of the glen. After crossing Ransleugh Glen the railway enters the policies of Culzean Castle and continues for about a couple of miles emerging again almost at Maidens Station. The picturesque village of Maidens resembles Dunure in so far as it is a fishing village, but it has not the high backing of cliffs which shelted Dunure so much, and in consequence is very bracing, although not at all exposed, being screened from the strong prevailing south-west winds by Turnberry Point, which forms a beautiful sandy bay. About a mile south of Maidens to the right and immediately alongside the railway is the farmhouse of Shanter, whither "Tam" was wending his uncertain way when he had his memorable encounter with "Cutty Sark." Soon the train stops at Turnberry Station, from which a covered way leads to the magnificient hotel built at great expense by the railway company in connection with the two fine golf courses recently opened here. The hotel, which stands on the hillside overlooking the links, and is without doubt the finest hotel outside of a city in the kingdom, it built in the Georgian period of architecture, and was designed by Mr James Millar of Glasgow, who

was also responsible for the beautiful buildings of the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901, than which no greater praise can be given as to the purity and excellence of the design. The building consists of the front or main building with wings at each extremity forming a large courtyard, down the centre of which is a commodious conservatory and lounge which is continued in a covered way right up to the station buildings, while the ends of the north and south wings are connected by a pergola over which rose and clinging plants grow. The entrance hall is handsomely pannelled in oak with a dull wax finish, while the monotony is relieved by marble columns of noble proportions supporting the ceiling. The lounge immediately adjoining is also finished in oak wainscote, while it is floored in common with the hall and the main corridor with black and white marble slabs. The main staircase of marble rises from the hall, and there is also an electric passenger elevator. The billiard-room to the south contains three tables and is very efficiently warmed and ventilated by means of steam so that the tables are always in good order. Next to the billiard room is the writing room, all done in white, as is also the drawing room. To the north of the hall is the dining room, a charming apartment finished in white enamel with French windows to the sea front going on to a verandah which runs almost the full length of the building. The kitchen offices, also on this floor, take up the greater part of the north wing and are much superior to those often found in houses four times the size of this, everything being on a most complete scale and designed in such a manner that there is no place that dirt can lodge. A passage leading off from the south end of the main building brings us to the golfers' quarters, where special provision has been made for golfers coming in from the course. Here are half-a-dozen bath-rooms with large baths and sprays with either salt or fresh water, and a large plunge bath, besides a hair-dresser's room, and drying room for wet clothes. There are also a number of bedrooms in this wing, and a lounge and bar with a separate entrance for golfers. On the first floor to which access may be had by several stairs are a large number of bedrooms, while in the main building suites of almost any size can be made up. The second floor is entirely taken up with bedrooms, all finished in white and with plenty of light. A feature of the hotel is the completeness of the bathrooms, there being no less than 18 of them all fitted up in the most modern style. All corridors and public rooms, besides a number of bedrooms, are heated by a most complete system of steam radiators, while the house is lighted throughout by electricity. Facing the shore road

are all the office buildings of the hotel, including houses for all workmen about the place, while there are commodious stables and motor car sheds with pit and workshop for those who wish to keep their vehicles here, while directly in front of the hotel are tennis lawns (2), croquet green, and bowling green. The golf courses, of which there are two—18 holes and 9 holes (ladies') will bear favourable comparison with any of the first-class courses, and are under the care of Mr Weir, late of Cruden Bay. At the 5th hole, near the lighthouses, may be seen the ruins of Turnberry Castle, now almost buried, but possessed of great interest, it being the castle of Robert the Bruce and the scene of the first fight in his final attempt to free Scotland, which culminated at Bannockburn. Leaving Turnberry Station to finish our journey to Girvan, we pass first Dipple then Chapeldonan, both the scene of incidents connected with the "Tragedy of Auchendrane," the details of which becoming known to Sir Walter Scott led him to write the story in poetical form. About a mile further on we once more join the main line to Stranraer, and in a few minutes the train draws up at Girvan Station, from where there is a good service of trains to Stranraer (for Ireland), and to Ayr and Glasgow. This shore route from Ayr to Girvan for picturesque views and maritime and sylvan scenery may well take rank as one of the most interesting lines in Scotland and Turnberry, either as a summer or a winter resort, will compare favourably with any watering place anywhere. It may reasonable be hoped that in a very few years the Dunure and Turnberry Light Railway will be one of the most remunerative extensions which the company have ever made.



TURNBERRY GOLF LINKS.

TURNBERRY HOTEL.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Western Meeting.

The races which take place annually in the county town suggest a chapter which cannot well be omitted in the Reminiscences of Auld Ayr, and a brief description of what they were like fifty or sixty years ago cannot but be interesting. A comparison of the meeting now with what it was then is all the more attractive from the fact that in a few years, probably, the difference will be still more marked when a new course will be formed and the present course, which we have for a century thought the finest in the kingdom, reverts back, not, perhaps, to what it was at one time, viz., the town's common, but an attractive public park, a thing of beauty and utility, and a joy for ever. We must remember the Scriptural reminder of the propriety of him who is buckling on his armour not boasting as one who has achieved something and is taking his armour off. There is a probability that a new course will soon be formed in every way superior for racing purposes and affording conveniences which cannot be obtained on the present course; but, at the same time, the history of the Western Meeting in its occupancy of the present ground, with long and happy associations, will be remembered with pleasure by thousands, and many years will elapse before the new course, no matter how excellent it may be, will have acquired the hold on the popular feelings which the present course has so unquestionably obtained.

Even the changes which have taken place in the course within the past fifty years, all tending to improvement, are just as great as will be noticeable in the new course, which in all likelihood will be formed at Braehead and Blackhouse. Even Whitletts Road, fifty years hence, will be as much transformed as the Racecourse Road has been in my recollection. Midton Road, a leading thoroughfare to the course sixty years ago, was not in existence, though now it forms continuous rows of cottages and villas. Then it was only a footpath through fields of pasture, and occasionally of waving corn or rye. The course itself was frequently cropped, and I have seen the races run when the corn was just newly cut and standing in stooks in the centre of the course, only the racing track being kept clear for the racing, and the turf not disturbed. With the Racecourse and Midton Roads all built up in recent years, it will not surprise many if in a similar time Whitletts Road be similarly covered, and the

north-east of Ayr become as fashionable, or at least as densely populated, as the south-west. The new course also will start fully equipped, and will not leave room for such frequent improvements. All the experience gained during the past century will be devoted to commence it thoroughly up to date, with an improved grand stand, or rather a number of grand stands, paddocks, stables, and offices, and with all the improvements of Goodwood and Doncaster added to it.

Fifty years ago the racing track was close to the wall, only a little rounded off at the corner nearest the road into the town. Between the wall and the ropes there was standing room for only about three deep, and even the ropes extended only from the distance post at the corner next the cottage of the Misses Begg to the winning post. The Grand Stand—or View House as it was called then—was on the opposite side of the road on the farm of Seafield, and would not contain a tenth part of the ticket-holders now. It was pretty well confined to the County aristocracy; our local aristocracy had not then got over the barrier between the town and the county. The winning post was near to where it is now, but close to the wall, and opposite a wooden hut for saddling and weighing out, while adjacent there would be a temporary paddock about 40 yards square, railed in, for the horses to race in the next contest. Then opposite St Leonard's there was a wooden stable, where the horses were quartered. Near the paddock and winning post there was a huge wooden erection of two stories put up yearly. On the ground flat was the principal refreshment place on the ground, considered much superior to the other tents or stands which were adjacent. On the top flat was the public grand stand—admission one shilling; and at that time seemingly the public found it as difficult to raise that shilling as nowadays to raise a guinea to get admittance into the grand stand and paddock, where there is certainly much more comfort. Around this grand stand there were an unlimited number of country carts with fruits of all kinds—not barrows and ginger beer stands—wheels of fortune, and other games not now allowed, though we have in their place bookmakers and betting men, and a hellish legion ten times worse—the scum of many places near and afar off. No doubt there was betting then, but not in any way so open and prominent as now, and it was certainly done much more quietly.

There were no £1000 races then. Such prizes were not even thought of. I think £50 was about the outside stake for any of the races, except perhaps the subscription for the Ayr Gold Cup, which also then was much less in

value than it is now. Altogether there was much less money spent, and there was not a fourth of the attendance, but probably there was quite as much pleasure, and it was still the great Ayr Races, the fashionable meeting of Scotland, with the grand county balls held every night and the shows down the quay, the week being entirely given over to frivolity.

The great supporters of the Western Meeting then were the Earl of Eglinton (of Irish Lord-Lieutenantship fame) and Sir James Boswell of Auchinleck. We were all either Eglintonians or Boswellites. The popular laird of Auchincruive, Mr R. A. Oswald, was also a warm supporter, and when a winner, the crowd were most enthusiastic. On one occasion it was remarkable, and I question if ever such enthusiasm has been visible on Ayr Racecourse since. As the horses were coming up the straight, nearing the winning post, neck and neck, the crowds were wildly shouting, "Dick wins!" "Dick wins!" and win he did, as hats and caps were thrown up in the air with great glee, many of them never to be recovered. Mr Merry and one or two others who joined in afterwards took a long time to ride into similar popularity. I should mention that Mr J. D. Boswell, of Garrallan, was then Clerk of the meeting, and with him was associated Bailie Bone, of Newton, in his office in Sandgate Street. The Western Meeting have always been singularly fortunate in their appointment of Clerks, to which doubtless the increasing prosperity of the races is due. I have mentioned that the racing track as well as the grand stand have been quite altered since my younger days. The best has been made of the racing track which is possible in the square field which forms the course. It has only been possible to round the curves and give a straight race home for about two furlongs. The wonder is that more accidents did not take place in former years, running the horses so near to an irregular dry stone wall and the curves not nearly so sweet as they are now. I have always some pleasure in remembering that once when in the Town Council I was able to contribute to an improvement which has enabled the Western Meeting to make the course much better and improve the surroundings as well. The south side of the course at the time, where it marched with the lands of Belleisle, was enclosed only with a dilapidated low stone wall, which ran zig-zag, and altogether was not only a very insufficient fence, but an eyesore to the neighbourhood, and made the turn for the horses there both unpleasant and unsafe. I happened to come in contact with the late Mr Shaw, who had some years previously succeeded Mr Boswell as secretary, continuing even

in an increased degree the popularity of the meeting. Whether by accident or design, it does not matter, our conversation drifted to racecourse matters, and among the subjects this wall was mentioned. I think it is very likely that I was led on to make the remark that I thought it would be of great advantage both to the course and to the property of Belleisle if an agreement could be come to by which this wall would be straightened or rounded and a better wall erected in its place. Mr Shaw cordially agreed with the suggestion, and informed me that if I could induce the Town Council to agree to it the Western Meeting and the proprietor of Belleisle would jointly agree to the most favourable terms being given. I knew well how difficult it was to induce the Council to spend any money bringing a direct benefit to themselves, and still more of it was to benefit others. Mr Shaw's proposal, however, was so advantageous to the town that I thought it would be willingly acceeded to. The terms suggested were to excamb several poles of land, and for every pole thrown into the lands of Belleisle from the course two poles would be given for it, the Meeting and Belleisle to pay the whole costs of the new wall which would be at least six feet high. I assured Mr Shaw if he would personally propose this to the Council officially through the Town Clerk, it would be at once agreed to. The Clerk of the Western Meeting, however, had on several previous occasions been in negotiations with the Council, and did not care to approach them. Several times they had shown a rack-renting spirit, and he did not care to suggest any alterations which might lead to further exactions. The proposal, however, was so feasible and so beneficial to all concerned that I was sorry to let it slip, and it was ultimately agreed that I was to induce the Council to approach him "and he would agree to it" if the Committee of the Council would come armed with powers to complete the arrangement. A good deal of the business of the Council then, as now, was done in Committee, and I found no difficulty in getting the Works Committee to appoint a sub-committee to approach Mr Shaw to ascertain on what terms the improvement could be effected and with powers, if reasonable, to have it carried out. A committee composed of the late Dean of Guild Hunter, ex-Provost Templeton, and myself was appointed almost unanimously, the only opposition experienced being from the late Mr R. M. Beveridge, who was always strong in opposition. Mr Beveridge's opposition, however, was overcome on the distinct assurance that the town was to be at no expense in the matter. Needless to say that for once the Town Council, The Western Meeting, and Belleisle

made a most agreeable settlement of the matter. The bend of the course was sweetened immensely by a circle wall, which materially altered for the better the curve of the track, while the approach to Belleisle was also much improved, and the town had a few poles of ground added to the course which cost them nothing, and it added very much to any secret delight that it was Mr R. M. Beveridge who moved a vote of thanks to the members of committee who had so ably carried out the negotiations.

One great advantage the Meeting will have when in possession of a course of their own, they will not be liable to any increase of rent or sharing the revenue of their stands, or being in any way interfered with. At present the rent paid for the racecourse is four times its agricultural value. At the same time, as there are 70 or 80 acres in the course, a public park may be made of it of immense attraction and value, making roads through it, and while having ample space for a public park of handsome dimensions, ten or twelve acres may be fued, which would yield a revenue more than the Meeting presently pay for it.

Fifty years ago a great accompaniment to the races were the shows. As juveniles we took more interest in the shows than the races. Indeed, to us the races would have been worthless, except on a holiday, without the shows, with their merry-go-rounds, fly boats, and shooting saloons. The shows proper generally had an outer stage on which there were many attractions, often better than those inside. The one attraction I remember best was the suspending of a number of scones covered with treacle by rings, the ends of which were attached so that they could be dangled. The fun consisted of a number of boys being taken from the crowd, who had to eat the scones with their hands tied behind their back, rewards being given to the most expeditious. Boys then, as now, were often hungry, and no doubt the scone and treacle were sufficient reward, even though much of the treacle should be left outside their mouths. This afforded great fun to the onlookers. The whole surroundings, however, were quite as noisy and harum scarum as now, and as brilliantly lighted, for the blaze of paraffin lamps, which were numerous, gave a light quite as effective as the electric globes, and every nut-barrow had a lamp of its own, every one aiming at the greatest glare. There was more manuel labour connected with the shows then than now. Neither steam nor electricity was in request. The hobby horses even had no mechanical appliances. Youngsters were invited to get below the bars supporting the horses and push. In return for this they had a free ride, a self-supporting way

of doing business, quite agreeable to the youngsters, and of course saving all expense to the owners. Roulette, and all games of chance, card tricks, thimble and pea, and pick the loop, were the rage, and openly patronised. Stances on either side of the roads from the Quay, up New Bridge Street, and up the High Street, sometimes as far as the Star Hotel, were permitted. The King's Arms used to be a great centre for the best roulette tables to take their stances. Gentlemen, not altogether sober, sometimes would come out of the hotel and keep playing till midnight, and they were fleeced not only of coppers and silver, but sovereigns often found their way into the exchequer of the owners of the roulette board. This was in the good old days of Captain M'Donald, who did not think it his imperative duty to do anything but run people in who were partially intoxicated, but rather instruct the force to protect incapables from swindlers. The roulette table now is abolished, and high time too. There could not have been more open swindling; but another form of swindling has taken its place, for betting I contend only opens the door to swindling of the worst kind. Perhaps, however, bookmaking is not swindling, as the money is handed over to the "bookie" by their victims, who think they can victimise them, while they are only victimised themselves. After all, what can be said about it? It seems fair enough. There are a great many who think themselves much more clever than the bookmakers. They risk a pony or a monkey, which means certain sums of money. They take it to the bookmaker, think they know better than he, and they hope to at least double their investments. As a rule, he knows better than they, and he pockets their money, only allowing them to win occasionally, so as to induce them to continue their folly. One of the first bookmakers who came to Ayr, and he must have come accredited, as he was always assigned the privileged position next the grand stand, was "Billy Nicol" from Nottingham. He was very illiterate, but had his clerk by his side, who kept him at least financially right. Billy, however, rose from the racecourse and became a Town Councillor in Nottingham (I presume it is a rise to ascend from the turf to a Council Board). Not long after his election, as he had been successful in the economical ticket, notice of motion was given by a member that the wall of a certain churchyard was in need of rebuilding, and that it be done. Here was the economic Billy's chance! Rising, he, in the Nottingham illiterate doric, moved the previous question. A telling speech was made in favour of the rebuilding of the wall. Billy, in the course of his brief remarks, said

he had been returned by the ratepayers to look after economy, and getting heated and excited, he exclaimed, "What's the use of a waal for this 'ere churchyard? Them boogars in there can't get out and us boogars here don't want in, so I don't see any use for a wall." It is immaterial to my narrative whether the wall was built or not. Now-a-days, however, bookmakers are not by any means so very illiterate; they will compare favourably in many cases with our most intelligent Town Councillors. They enjoy life and pass it merrily. On very rare occasions they burn their fingers, and when they do so they only increase their gains at the following meeting. With them champagne is a common beverage, and to keep them in this, many have to do with something much less expensive. Betting, however, is, I think, the only evil connected with the Races, and I presume, like all other meetings where crowds do congregate, we will have the best and the worst coming into contact. The Western Meeting certainly draws to Ayr the best of society, but, unfortunately, we must take the worst with them. If we have the richest in the land with us for a time, we may depend upon it that the poor will come as well. The halt, the maimed, and the blind will come, with what intent we can only imagine.

I have referred specially to the races and the shows, which after all were of a similar character to what they are yet, but fifty years ago we had what the present generation know nothing of. We have no Heather Jock now! No Ayr race meeting was complete without Heather Jock with his gingling staff of bells and his quaint singing (while marching around an open space encircled by onlookers) of "Bonnie Annie Lawrie," and at the end of each refrain of "lay me doun and dee," lying down on his back. Frequently a number of boys, with whom he was a great favourite, would lie down with him, to show their appreciation of "Bonnie Annie Lawrie." Then there was Old Malabar, another prime favourite, a great conjurer and sword swallower. His great feat was to throw a wooden ball high in the air and catch it in a cup on his forehead as it descended. Perhaps even more wonderful was to swallow or put down his throat, or at least seem to do so, a sword and a three-cornered bayonet. Similar wonders are performed still, perhaps more wonderful, but no entertainment at any time will remain so long on the memory as that of Heather Jock and Old Malabar. There were, of course, other worthies who frequented the meeting, but none so popular, and I must leave them out, as probably the chapter has extended to too great a length already.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Old Ayr Racecourse.

As supplementary to the foregoing chapter, I am induced to make my notice of the Western Meeting more complete by giving the following contribution from the "Glasgow Herald," evidently supplied by one who has an intimate knowledge of the subject. The article appeared at the close of 1906:—

"After a period extending to close upon two centuries the old racecourse at Ayr is about to be deserted. A new state of things has arisen in the conduct of what is termed the sport of kings, and the old-time courses have to be abandoned in favour of enclosed tracks which will admit of the collection of gate money and stand fees, whilst allowing trainers what seems desirable for the modern type of racehorse—a straight mile if possible, and at the least six straight furlongs. The old idea of a racecourse was a circle round which the horses could gallop, sometimes for four miles, or three times in two-mile heats, the public being able to witness every part of the running from knolls or other vantage points in the centre. Nowadays the non-paying public are taken very little into consideration, and the attendances at the Scottish meetings in autumn are but little regulated by the backward or forward condition of the Scottish harvests. Stabling close to the paddock, sidings running into the grounds, special saloon members' trains, garages, etc., as exemplified at Sandown and Kempton Park, are what is considered essential nowadays, and Scotland must not lag behind the times. The Western Meeting, so far as 'class' is concerned, and this either as regards company or horses, must always be recognised as the race meeting of Glasgow, the railway facilities being now so very complete, the journeys out and home quick, and the fares so reasonable.

"On locking up the old weighing-room door at Ayr for the last time, a general glance may be given to the history of Scottish horse-racing. Of course, one naturally reverts to "The Bells" period of the sport, when a rider on a good steed bore the bell. This came after the Briglia-d'Oro (bridle of gold) period of the Normans, and was taken up generally over the country in the interests of horse breeding. The Lanark and Paisley Silver Bells trophies still remain on our programmes, but the Carlisle Bell, which was an object of strong competition between

dalesmen and moss-troopers, is preserved in the Town Hall. It was originally presented by the Earl of Dacnes, who was governor of the Castle in the raiding days, and it bears the inscription:—

He who rides this bell to take,
Must pray for Lady Dacnes's sake.

The oldest racecourse in Scotland undoubtedly was the King's Park at Stirling, where the Stuart Kings ran their 'courseires.' Arabs, Barbs, and others they had in the King's stables there from all countries with which the Court held connection. Though horse breeding in Scotland was to a certain extent influenced by the Stirling contests, we really had very little horse racing, as we know it now, till the establishment of 'County Cups.' One by one these old county cup race meetings dropped out owing to lack of support. The Dawsons and l'Ansons went south for increased business and a more centralised position and the public. Their northern patrons extended to them their custom, and Cupar, Aberdeen, Stirling, Airdrie, with a number of others, fell out, the "war chest" not being equal to the carrying on of the campaign. Perth and Kelso followed; Musselburgh still holds out; and Hamilton Park of the latter decades of the seventeenth century, when the course was laid between the confluence of the Avon and the Clyde, still used as the traing-ground of the Queen's Own Yeomanry. There were some grand old-time matches on the Hamilton course in those days, and in one of these Jemmy, by Volunteer, out of a granddaughter of the famed Highflyer, which latter gives the name to the private residence of all the Tattersalls, beat Major Maxwell's St. Cyrus for a thousand guineas.

"Peebles was possibly the chief Scottish venue during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, thanks to the Earl of March, whose family became founders of Goodwood. The Peebles meeting seems to have been specially well conducted, the rules as to weights carried, rubbing between heats, and allowances for whip, saddle, and bridle being well drawn out. The horses were started by the tuck of the town-crier's drum; but, as they had to cover four miles, it did not matter which form the starting-gate took. To slightly alter an old Yorkshire ballad, the riders "pouthered up and down a bit, and had a rattlin' four miles, don't you know."

"Ayr ranked possibly next to Peebles at this period and for some time after. The following is the first authentic programme:—

Ayr Races, 10th October, 1775.

To be run for over the Ayr Course the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Purse as follows, viz.:—

On Tuesday, 10th of October, a Purse of Fifty Pounds sterling by any horse, mare, or gelding, the best of three fair mile heats, and carrying the following weight:—Four-year-old, 8 stone; five-year-old, 9 stone; six-year-old, 9 stone 10lb.; aged horses, 10 stone. And on Thursday, 12th of October, another Purse of Fifty-Pounds sterling by any horse, mare or gelding carrying weight as above, the best of three fair mile heats. The horses to be entered on the Saturday preceding the races, when proper certificates of their age must be produced, and the enterer of each horse to pay Two Guineas of Entry-Money and five shillings sterling to the C.C. And if entered after the day, which may be done at the post, to pay double. Three horses or mares belonging to different proprietors to start, or no race, and in that case Five Guineas to be paid for each of those entered. The Stewards and Judges appointed by them to be sole judges to determine all difference or dispute in or about the races.—William M'Dowall, Esq., Castle Semple, and Hamilton Blair, Esq., of Blair, Stewards.

"It may be understood from this that the meeting was conducted in a very old-time flapping character, the interested crowd on their rough Galloways galloping alongside and shouting directions to the riders of their particular fancies. Gradually, however, those Scottish noblemen who had been to Newmarket introduced improved systems, and the Scottish meetings began to get reformed in a useful direction. Training methods began to be more studied, and superior horsemanship marking itself began to be more valued and appreciated. Pace was wanted by the Post Office for fast-mail stage horses, and the enthusiasm over a good horse race gradually spread.

"Undoubtedly the first great supporter of the Ayr meeting was Lord Montgomerie of Coilsfield, father of the Tournament Earl, and best known in Turf history as the owner of Blue Bonnet, the Flying Dutchman, and other horses. His lordship's horses were trained at Bogside, Irvine, by George Dawson, father of the great family of trainers. His lordship owned some good horses, Caleb Quotem, when a five-year-old, winning His Majesty's Guineas at Ayr in 1808. This year saw, chiefly through the instrumentality of his lordship, the institution of the Ayr Gold Cup, which he won the first time run for with the filly by Benningborough in the following year, 1809.

"The meetings at Ayr were, during the first two decades of the past century, marked by a good deal of festivity outside of the actual sport; the natives dining on "kipper," for which Ayr, or rather the Newton of Ayr on the north side of the river, was then noted. The turbot, a rather scarce fish nowadays on Ayrshire shores, was the delicacy of the rich, and we find in the 'Edinburgh Courant' of July 24, 1806, the following:—'The turbot fishing continues at Ayr with increasing success. Many hundreds have been taken, and that fish which there till now was only accessible to the rich is brought into market in abundance and sold at a moderate price.' With turbot and salmon there was plenty of enjoyment in the evening, the company listening mayhap to the famed tenor, Templeton, and his great song, 'Had I a heart for falsehood framed.'

"It was not a good day for racing at Ayr when Lord Montgomerie died, and George Dawson and young Tom Dawson, subsequently to be known as 'Old Tom of Tupgill,' then a few years old, had to go east from their happy old quarters overlooking the confluence of the Irvine and the Garnock, and which less than thirty years later was to see racing and chasing conducted up to a standard hitherto unknown throughout the realm. Lady Montgomerie retained her deceased husband's sympathies, and located at Auchans, now styled 'Old Auchans,' situated almost under the walls of the old Castle of Dundonald, whilst the young Lord was a laddie she let his Lordship's old trainer have stabling for two of his favourite horses, Caleb Quotem and Stamford. It was this connection at Auchans in the early days which led to the very close association in after life with the Archibald William, the thirteenth Earl of Eglinton, and the Dawson family. The old house of Auchans is a beautiful but interesting ruin, situated in a lovely corner of a sylvan bank. It was in this old house, now inhabited by ploughmen, that Susannah, Countess of Eglinton, the tall and handsome daughter of the Earl of Cassillis, set the style of carriage and dignity to Edinburgh society. The lady had some eccentricities, one of which took the form of making pets of rats, which she used to entice from the cornices. Her beautiful complexion, which she preserved till she was ninety years of age, she owed, it has been declared, to her performing her usual ablutions with sow's milk. Readers of Dr Johnston's tour will find most interesting allusion to this old Ayrshire mansion, where the Doctor and 'Bozzy' were welcome guests.

"Though the old place is fraught with much general historic interest, it is at this time most peculiarly associated

with Scottish turf history. The thoroughbred horses which were located there, amongst others John Bull, had much influence on the horse breeding of the day, and that both north and south. Caleb Quotem, after two seasons in the Lothians, was located there, but the best horse which stood there was Stamford, of which George Dawson thought so much that he named his new house on the slope of Gullane Hill Stamford Hall. The old horse's card read thus:—

> 'The ensuing season, 1815, at Auchins, Ayrshire, that powerful four-year-old horse Stamford at eleven guineas, the groom's fee included. He was got by Sir Peter Teazle out of Hermione. N.B.—Every accommodation for mares and foals at Auchins, which is eight miles from Ayr, five from Irvine, and six from Kilmarnock.—Further particulars may be had on applying to George Dawson, Haddington.'

Coming down to more modern periods we have the gala days of the Eglinton Tournament (1839, when the Queen of Beauty, the late Duchess of Somerset, was the cynosure of all eyes as she sat in the centre of the grand stand to the south of the present roadway. James Merry of Belladrum rode and won a match that year against Sir James Boswell of Auchinleck. He had made a small start the year previous with a horse called Florentian, which was trained by Knight somewhere on the banks of the canal in the Port-Dundas neighbourhood not now identifiable. His actual turf career did not begin till he brought William l'Anson to Gullane. So far as patronage of the turf from Glasgow was concerned at that time, Mr Merry had an able coadjutor in Mr Meiklam, one of the pioneers of Clyde yacht racing, and owner of the famous mare Inheritress, which won the Ayr gold cup by a length from Mr Merry's Don John in 1844.

"The modern school of racing frequenters will easily recall the days when the grand stand was a wooden erection on a site almost opposite the present judge's chair, of the opening of the present grand stand in 1867, when amongst the colours borne were Miss Havelock by Rataplan, Lecturer, and others. The blue and silver braid of the Jardines was often seen to victory, and the struggle between Mandrake and 'Fiddler' Smith's Paganim cannot well be forgotten by those who were there to see. Mr Merry was always an exciting centre in the latter days, and there were many familiar notables amongst owners and trainers. The bookmakers—Jackson, Steele, Peach, and Tom King,

the fighter—were also interesting, not the least interesting being old Jenny Barber, who, a good singer, used to give himself away to 'Willie brewed a peck o' maut.' The tune may have been all right, but the malt accent had a most decidedly gin flavour. The old course has, indeed, always been associated with much Bohemian happiness, and no doubt though deserted by the racehorse will remain so. It was at the old corner near the Doon where, in their little cottage, a little poesy of flowers, lived Burns's nieces, old maids of seventy, the Misses Begg. Every year they gave flowers to the Militia, and every Sunday on church parade the bandmaster would, passing the old cottage, strike up the poet's song, 'I'm owre young to marry yet.' The old course will be deserted, but it still will have its history."

The New Racecourse.

To complete our notice of the Western Meeting we give the following "Note from Current Topics," which appeared in the "Ayr Observer" of the 18th June, 1907:—

It is with mixed feelings the decision has been arrived at, that the old Racecourse is to be abandoned and that the great Western Meeting will in future be held at the new Racecourse which is being prepared on the lands of Auchincruive and Craigie. The noblemen and gentlemen who compose the "Western Meeting," and the whole community as well, cannot help these feelings in leaving what has been known as THE Racecourse for many generations past. Any reminiscences of Ayr which have ever appeared have never been complete without some allusion to, or association with, THE Racecourse, THE Ayr Races, THE Racecourse Road, and THE Western Meeting. There was never any dubiety about "THE." There were numerous race meetings in many quarters, but THE Ayr Races always held the place of THE great meeting, in fact THE meeting of the year. I hope and expect that this will continue. The whole history of the Western Meeting has been associated with progress. There has never been a set back. From the modest commencement of the Races on the "Town's Common" long, long ago, for stakes, until the stakes ran into figures; and from the wooden stand where a hundred people received scanty accommodation, till we had the Grand Stands, where all classes could be comfort-

ably accommodated, the whole march of the Western Meeting has been one of continued success, until now its very success has outgrown the accommodation which was once thought to be almost unlimited. It is no small change that has been made. The change of situation is of comparatively little importance. The Races will still be THE Ayr Races. It will still be THE Western Meeting, but a new and enlarged course has now been secured, an ideal course, not only larger but in every way better, and equipped in a style for which the old course could not have been adapted. Whatever doubts may have been entertained as to the necessity of a change will be set at rest, as the first meeting takes place this year in September. It was no desire for change which prompted the removal; indeed, those who have been instrumental in carrying out the change were for long very reluctant to entertain the idea. Modern requirements, however, and the increasing prosperity of the meeting carried the day, and now even in its comparatively unfinished state it is evident to all that Ayr, besides having the premier meeting in Scotland, will have the premier course, which is being fitted up in a style equal to some of the finest courses in England. With such a commencement what may the new Racecourse not become? May this not be a future for Ayr? with racing and training establishments in the immediate vicinity of the town; while a new suburb, extending to Whitletts, quite as "aristocratic" as the present Racecourse Road—indeed, much improved and with a wider road—giving us the greatest change which has taken place in Ayr for a century. But I must not anticipate, though I have reliable authority for asserting that the new course is not surpassed for possibilities by any course in the United Kingdom. It is not improbable, however, that if in the past we have been visited by tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands may now find their way towards the Auld Toun. It is estimated that nearly a million visited Newmarket last year, so the Scottish Newmarket may expect something similar. At all events, the change now estimated is one which will work wonders, and it is interesting to look forward for, say, sixty years, to the story which will then be told by some one writing the "Reminiscences of Auld Ayr," of the changes wrought by the new course in the first decade of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Ayr Theatricals.

The erection of the New Gaiety Theatre, another attraction, suggests the devoting of a chapter to Auld Ayr theatricals. This chapter will be all the more interesting when I inform my readers that I am indebted for much of the details in it to the pen of the late Mr James Morris, who took such an interest in the drama in Ayr. I presume it is generally well known that we had a theatre in Ayr during the first half of last century—a very comfortable little theatre capable of holding 500 or 600. This was latterly altered and became the Queen's Rooms, and has again been transformed and is now the Baptist Temple. It became the property of Mr Morris, who all along had taken a warm interest in its success. Mr Morris writes as follows, giving his experience of theatricals in Ayr:—

As many of the celebrities connected with the drama have "strutted and fretted their hour upon the stage" in Ayr during the present century, it may not be uninteresting to the present generation as well as to those old enough to remember the characters, to take a passing glance at a few of the most prominent of those "who live to please."

Mr Morris informs us he came to Ayr to reside in the year 1809, and found, on his arrival, an unusually respectable company of actors, under the management of Mr Beaumont performing in a vacated soap-work nearly adjoining the gate of Dalblair House, the property of a gentleman of the name of Gibb, who had amassed a little fortune by exercising the trade of a soap boiler, by which he was enabledt to build the elegant mansion near his works in the hope, it was said, of attaining by a matrimonial alliance then in view, a fortune equal to the requirements of a large establishment. But as "the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agleg," disappointment was the result, and the unfortunate Mr Gibb found himself, when the house was finished, on the outside of it.

The next company who occupied the soap-work was managed by Montgomery and Lacy, two good actors—the latter a splendid violinist. This company, as well as the former, was not only largely patronised, but entertained by several of the most respectable of the citizens. It may be noticed in passing that the well-known Mr Alexander of Glasgow Theatre, acted here about this time as a lad under the name of Master Middleton. Following these we had, still in the same building, the celebrated Henry Erskine

Johnston, a really first-rate actor and said to have no competitor in his original character of "Young Norval."

The theatrical business was next removed to Content Street, Wallacetown, in a building now occupied as Welsh's Brass Foundry, where it continued under Mr H. E. Johnston until 1812. Mr Johnston being a universal favourite, a new theatre (above referred to) was projected and built, that gentleman being lessee and part owner, and in which appeared, in due succession, most of the great actors and actresses of the day, who were well supported, so much so, that upon one occasion the entire Edinburgh company, under the never-to-be-forgotten Mr Murray, and the talented Mrs. H. Siddens, made out an entire season; and the same may be said of Seymour, with the whole staff of the Glasgow company.

Mr Morris' reminiscences we give in his own words. He says in the comic walk my old friend Lloyd occupied a very prominent position. Those who have had the good fortune to witness his performances in pieces where Murray and he assumed characters peculiarly their own must have enjoyed a treat of no ordinary kind. The first time I had the gratification of seeing them act together in Edinburgh, I can never forget the impression they made upon me. They were enacting a piece called, I think, "The Golden Farmer." Such acting by such a pair of inimitable comedians I do not expect to see again.

The great Edmund Kean was the celebrity who appeared in the Ayr theatre, of whom it may be related in passing, that while playing in his early day subordinate characters in the provincial towns, he was attached to a party who were performing here in an old school-room, at back of Wallace Tower, in the Mill Vennel, in which "Jamie Murdoch" used to boast that he had had the honour, when a boy, of snuffing the stage candles during Kean's performances.

An anecdote relating to Kean, which may be relied upon as a fact, is worthy of record. When he made his first appearance in Queen Street Theatre, Glasgow, after his successful debut in London, the manager, Harry Johnston, proposed engaging him for two nights in Ayr, to which the little Edmund replied that, having been in the early part of his career hissed off the stage there in attempting to perform his great character of the Duke of Gloucester in "Richard III.," which he was then acting as well as he had ever done since, that circumstance might be remembered against him, not to Harry's advantage. Yet, come he did, and filled two tremendously crowded houses to "Richard III." and "Shylock" at double prices, and

there being at the time some public occasion in Ayr—most likely a Circuit Court—in which Francis Jeffrey and other eminent counsel were employed, they all attended the theatre, occupying seats in the centre of the pit, and seemed quite delighted. It may be necessary to state the reason for Kean assuming the character of "Gloucester" in the old school-house. It was thus:—The regular tragedian of the company, who was announced in the bills to play the part, not making his appearance at the "hour of call," it placed the manager in an awkward dilemma, when Kean at once expressed his readiness to undertake the place of the absent member of the corps dramatique, and, being accepted, the performance was proceeded with, with satisfaction to himself, but the audience, perceiving his style of acting to be so very different from all former delineations of that character, a universal hiss greeted the young aspirant to histrionic fame, and sent him back to resume characters, seemingly to his detractors, more suited to his talents.

On one of the evenings of Kean's performances in Ayr Theatre, a man in the livery of a servant, sat in front of me, while Kean was playing "Othelo" in the "Moor of Venice," during which he seemed, by his uneasy manner, to have a "clew" annoying him somewhere; but on Kean's appearance to address the Senate amid the most profound silence in the house, "James" could no longer stand the apparent (to him) absurdity of one talking "blethers" to a lot of quiet gentlemen sitting round the table, from which no sport was likely to ensue, and he addressed me thus—"whan wull the ferce begin?" This man would, no doubt, have been delighted to see the great tragedian quietly removed from the stage, and his performances substituted by Punch and Judy, or any other comic exhibition, where fun, not "greeting," was the result. He had enough of the latter at home.

Before concluding these little reminiscences of Kean, I may be permitted to add another, which occurred on board of a steamer betwixt Campbeltown and Ayr. Seymour, of the Glasgow Theatre, having engaged the great tragedian, then living at Lochfad, in Bute, to perform four nights here, fearing from his growing habits of intemperance, and at an inconvenient distance from Ayr that he could not be safely calculated upon for making his appearance there on Monday evening, he proceeded to Rothesay on Saturday, and hired a steamer to convey him to Campbeltown next day, where they could remain all night, and avail themselves of a regular steamer from thence to Ayr early on Monday morning. These arrangements having been carried out

satisfactorily, Seymour considered wisely that sailing directly to Ayr, and arriving there probably during divine service on Sunday, had better be avoided. Getting early on board the steamer at Campbeltown, both gentlemen occupied the cabin, where the passengers did not seem disposed to disturb them. The demand for whisky commenced, and Seymour, dreading the consequences, urged upon the steward the necessity of declaring his stock of "aqua vitæ" to have become exhausted. Being a passenger and an acquaintance of the Glasgow manager, I was, upon meeting him on deck, invited down to an introduction and to assist in keeping the great man sober. The whisky grievance was soon introduced, and regretting personal inconvenience from the want of it, we got to console ourselves by the anticipation of a speedy passage and an abundant supply on our arrival in Ayr. Getting, while on board, upon very friendly terms, Kean became, among other subjects, fervent in his admiration of our national poet Burns, placing him above Byron, and only inferior to Shakespeare. Arriving at the quay, where a carriage was in waiting, Kean was got speedily to bed; and getting up in the afternoon, refreshed "like a giant from sleep," performed "Richard" to perfection, though neither that, nor the three succeeding nights, were there such numerous audiences as had greeted him on his former appearances.

Amongst actors, as well as other professionals, jealousies, leading up to an uncontrollable desire to depreciate competitors, will occasionally "crop up." A little incident in illustration, occurring in Edinburgh, will close the remarks I have to make, in which Kean is noticed. Having, with three or four friends, taking a trip to Edinburgh during the visit of George the Fourth, we met there casually an actor of eminence with whom we were well acquainted. Some of us had a desire to see Kean, then in Edinburgh; others to dine and spend the evening somewhere. Our professional friend preferred the latter, declaring in such hot weather he could not sit in the theatre for an evening to see the best actor in the world, certainly not the worst.

The other artistes of eminence who succeeded those already noticed were Macready, Miss Foote, Mr and Mrs Wood, Miss Helen Faucit, G. V. Brooke, Miss Stephens, etc., etc.; while last, but not least, Mackay, the inimitable "Bailie Nicol Jarvie." Mackay made his debut in Ayr as a comic singer about the year 1810. He was a member of the band in the Argyllshire Militia, then quartered in Ayr Barracks, and his performances on particular occasions in the officers' mess-room having spread his comic fame, induced him to announce a concert in the old Assembly Rooms,

which unfortunately proved a failure. Two or three admirers of the talents and modesty exhibited by Mackay were induced to make a little collection of money amongst a limited number of friends, which they handed over, at the conclusion of the entertainment, to the grateful recipient. As one of the contributors, I was afterwards recognised by Mackay as an old acquaintance. Mackay's comic talent being duly admired and highly appreciated by our late townsman, Mr Robert Mackay, the latter applied to his friend, Harry Johnston, then manager of the Queen Street Theatre, Glasgow, to receive Mackay into his company there, recommending him in the strongest manner. The application was successful, and he was immediately installed in that establishment as comic and general actor. This was his first appearance on any theatrical stage, with what success most of His Majesty's subjects have been amply endorsed. I, as an old acquaintance of Robert Mackay, saw and read both the letter applying to Harry on behalf of his namesake and countryman, it is believed, and the reply accepting his service.

Giving precedence after old Kean to those in the highest order of merit, I notice Mr G. V. Brooke, who was lost a few years ago in the ill-fated steamer "London," on her voyage out to Australia. Brooke, born in Dublin, was there educated for the profession of the law; but, exhibiting when a mere youth unmistakeable dramatic talent, he appeared early on the boards, visiting professionally the principal towns on both sides of the Tweed, and thus began early to acquire histrionic fame. It was in the Auld Toun of Ayr, that he began his managerial career, with the view of "roughing it" as a manager, and acquiring in that way, by assuming characters in every grade of the profession, a fitness for undertaking their representation when circumstances required.

It was as a tragedian that he became so widely known and his splendid talents so highly appreciated, and yet the "gentleman Irishman" was the character in which he was most at home, and truly liked. A little incident in his professional life in proof of his partiality for that particular walk is worth notice, and became the means of "bringing him out" for the first time, on a particular occasion, for one night in an Irish afterpiece. Having arrived at Liverpool to commence a ten days' "starring" engagement in one of the theatres there, he was passing through the lobby towards the green room, for the double purpose of seeing the manager and meeting as usual the outgoing star, when his attention was attracted to a person sitting before the fire apparently in great distress. Brooke being a humane

man, inquired the cause of the man's sorrow, which he thus explained: "I had given unwearied attendance upon Mr —— during his engagement, and he knowing that I have a large family, and from other circumstances, promised to act for my benefit in the afterpiece to-morrow evening the character of Mr O'Calloghan in the Irish piece of "His Last Legs"; but he has just informed me that he required to leave to-morrow." "Then," said Brooke, "put my name in the bill for O'Calloghan in the afterpiece." With an expression of gratitude the man replied "That will do me no good, the public would not come for you." "Never fear," says Brooke, "give it a trial, and a few may turn out for a laugh at my presumption, and it will at all events serve your present purpose." The change was made accordingly, and a good house was the result—many theatrical critics being present who had a desire to witness the "break-down" of an eminent tragedian in an attempt to assume a character in which his talented predecessor had carried all before him. It turned out otherwise, however, and the applause that greeted Brooke was great. It may be noticed that the "Irish star" did not depart next day as he intended, but remained to witness from the gallery, incog, the discomfiture, as he anticipated, of a young competing "Paddy."

I made Brooke's first engagement for him as a star with David Prince Miller, the manager of a minor theatre in Glasgow, during which a gentleman aware of Brooke's peculiar retentive memory offered him one hundred guineas if he would undertake to read and repeat on the same evening the "Glasgow Herald" published that morning. He wrote to ask my opinion, telling me that he was confident of success, but as I advised him strongly against making the attempt, the matter went no further. After completing the engagement in Glasgow, his fame began to spread far and wide, and a succession of other engagements rapidly ensued, terminating in his appearance on the boards in London, where his success was complete. The great Macready, immediately after the first and successful appearance of Brooke in London, was desirous to see from one of the galleries his young and rising rival, and afterwards visited him in his retiring room, highly complimenting him on his success, and told him that if he only took care of himself he had no competitor on the British stage. Macready was then about to retire into private life.

Upon one occasion when Brooke was performing in Portsmouth, I think, the "Lady of Lyons" appeared in the bills of the day, and the gifted author (now Lord Lytton) being in the town was desirous of seeing "Claude Melnotte" in new hands, saw the performance, and at its conclusion

waited upon Brooke, and paid him the compliment of declaring that he had not previously seen his "Claude" so well acted.

An incident in the career of Brooke, while taking his farewell benefit at the conclusion of his first season as manager of the Ayr Theatre is worthy of notice, as giving an opinion of his great talents by a theatrical critic of no mean order, our late townsman, Dr Gibson. Casually meeting the doctor one forenoon, he asked me if I intended going to the theatre in the evening to see the great actor (Brooke), as he would like to accompany me, the play, "Lady of Lyons," being one of his favourite pieces. Not arriving together at the theatre, we were at opposite sides of the boxes, but at the conclusion of the first act I went over to the doctor to learn his opinion of "Claude," when he replied—"I have seen the best actors in London and elsewhere enact the part, and as far as the play has proceeded he is yet inferior to none of them. Again, at the conclusion, I paid another visit to the doctor, and found him delighted beyond measure, pronouncing the acting of "Claude Melnotte" to be faultless; "but," says he, "the man who can so beautifully portray that character, excelling all compeers, is utterly unfit to assume Irish characters. I shall wait a little, however, to see how he gets on, but I fear the consequences." When the afterpiece—"The Irish Attorney"—had got half way through, I once more visited my friend, the son of Esculapius, when he exclaimed, "That is the most extraordinary fellow I ever saw, he seems more at home in this character than the other."

Meeting next morning an old country gentleman who had been at the theatre the previous evening, he asked me what I thought of Brooke. My reply may be easily imagined, his was very characteristic of the rather cute old friend. He said, "I take him to be a great rogue. He has evidently been bred a lawyer o' the warst kind, an' weel up to a' the tricks o' the profession." I told Brooke of this some time after, and it amused him very much. I have seen Brooke, when "roughing it" as a manager, enact all kinds of parts or walks. As a sailor you naturally wondered whether he had ever been on shore, while from the gentleman to the robber he looked all the characters to perfection; indeed, with all that came in his way he was nature itself.

Few people had more opportunities of knowing him thoroughly, both as a correspondent and a visitor, than I had: and I am sure there are yet among my friends some who have not forgotten intellectual treats enjoyed by them at my home with Gustavus Brooke.

Brooke, after his engagement in London, visited pro-

fessionally the United States of America, Australia, etc., amassing large sums of money, which he never could keep. Like the poet Burns, "Coin his pouches wadna bide in," which placed him frequently in great difficulties. Hence his last trip to Australia, with the object of making and "laying bye" something for a "sair fit," but he was doomed never to reach his place of destination. He died a hero. [See account of the loss of the "London," which appeared in all the newspapers of the day."]

Superior artistes in the vocal art visited Ayr and performed in the theatre, viz., the veteran Braham, a genuine British singer, eclipsed by none in all the parts he undertook (barring Incledon, the greatest tenor of his day); nor has any native singer yet appeared to fill his place. Some of Braham's compositions are destined to "live," and will continue to be sung by such vocalists as may be able to execute them in something like the style of their gifted composer. I allude in particular to his "Polacca," and his fine duet, "When thy bosom heaves the sigh"; while other compositions, requiring fine taste and brilliant execution, lost nothing in his hands.

We had also occasionally the celebrated John Sinclair, at one time a member of the band in a Scottish regiment of militia, who, while in Aberdeen with the corps, acted as precentor to it on Sundays. He had a fine voice, superior taste, and a rapidity of execution excelled by few in his day. "Love amongst the Roses," composed expressly for him, will give some indication of his particular walk in song. Mr Sinclair held rather a superior position on the London boards, where, in such characters as "Macbeth," "Love in a Village," and other similar pieces, he was eminently successful.

John Templeton, the well-known tenor, was often here. He created quite a metropolitan and provincial sensation for some years after his debut as a lad in Edinburgh, on which occasion I was present.

I cannot omit, in passing, my old friend Mr Gale, who resided in Ayr for about a quarter of a century, and was, in his day, allowed by those qualified to judge to be unequalled as a psalm-singer in Great Britain, while in the highest taste, his inimitable time and ear, together with his perfect shake, amply qualified him for executing the most difficult pieces. In secular music, his rendering of the finest of our Scottish songs has not yet been equalled. Those who have listened to his "Lord Gregory" and many others of his favourite songs may look in vain for his successor.

As a composer, Gale was above mediocrity. One of his songs, "The Maid of Elderslie," published in Edinburgh

between sixty and seventy years ago by Purdie, I think, who purchased the copyright from the composer, lived to be popular, and gained a profit of many hundreds of pounds to the publishers. It is only a few years ago since it was discontinued in the lists of favourite songs by publishers.

A late celebrated Scottish composer, R. A. Smith, was originally a weaver in Paisley. He occasionally visited Ayr as a teacher of music, and was very successful in composing many pieces of sacred music. Most of his psalm tunes are invariably introduced in those churches where the taste for singing good compositions has not been violated by that of the present day. That some psalm-singers like the departed Gale may turn up to stem the tide of much modern jumping, trumpery, nicknamed "Improvement of Psalmody," devoid of all devotional taste or feeling, is devoutly to be desired. As Burns wrote—"Nae unison ha'e they wae oor Creator's praise." Smith was very successful in many of the songs published by him. I was pretty intimate with him, and once took occasion to ask him which of his songs was his own favourite, to which he replied—"Jessie the Flower of Dunblane," was decidedly the one of all his productions he expected to live. It may not be uninteresting to some, not aware of the circumstances, to learn that it was Gale who taught Smith the rudiments of his profession assisted and "brought him out." This pupil never ceased to speak rapturously of the great and envied talents of his master.

In noticing Incledon as the greatest tenor that Britain has yet produced, it may be interesting to relate that when getting his instructions from "Tommy Welsh," an accomplished musician, though no singer, Gale, as a lad attached to Broadwood's establishment, was sent every morning to tune the instrument and give attendance; consequently had opportunities of hearing his favourite songs, and amongst them the very popular little ballad, "Sally in our Alley," the music of which, as then sung, is in my possession.

It may be further noticed that in proof of Mr Gale's abilities, that in the early part of his life he sang with Incledon and Broham, in Glasgow, the celebrated trio, "When Sappho Tun'd," Incledon taking the leading part, Gale the middle, and Braham the third part. I should travel a long way to hear the piece so brilliantly executed. One of our finest Scottish songs, "O Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me," was composed by Tom Carter, an Englishman, who, though a fine musician, was no singer; but aware of the talent of Young Gale—at that time attached to Broadwood's establishment—requested him to sing the song for him, which he did to the great satisfaction of the author,

consequently Gale was the first to sing it from the manuscript.

I recollect Gale telling me that he was urgently requested by old——, the original "Young Meadows," to undertake that part in the piece of "Love in a Village," and in London actually attended a rehearsal, and went through the part to the entire satisfaction of the author and manager, who engaged him to appear upon an early day; but, as the old Scottish songs says, "He promised, but ne'er gaed back."

It may be thought that I have occupied too much of my readers' time with my old friend Gale in these reminiscences, but when one looks back upon his gentlemanly appearance in the desk, his inimitable singing of the Psalms of David, his graceful bow to an audience in the concert room, and his incomparable rendering of Scottish and National songs, my humble tribute to his memory may well be excused.

Other celebrities who have recently come amongst us need not here be noticed, the present generation, equally with myself, being acquainted with their merits; but it would be unpardonable in these reminiscences to overlook the appearance of the famed Paganini in our theatre. The house was crowded on the occasion. I occupied a place in the gallery—price 3s 6d—and it was most amusing to hear the remarks of the occupants of that part of the house, most of whom thought fine performances on the single string to be simply the tuning of his fiddle, and wondered "when he would begin." The whole affair was, with few exceptions, a disappointment to the audience, and consequent regret at parting with their money at the extravagant prices of 7s 6d, 5s, and 3s 6d; and yet Paganini was himself equally done by Seymour, the manager, who had engaged to pay him £100 sterling for that night before the performance should commence. Seymour managed the trick in this way. Going round to Paganini in his dressing-room in the theatre, he laid down £50, the drawings, as he said, chiefly from the gallery—the other parts of the house being mostly occupied by the nobility and gentry of the county, who all intended to be present another evening, on which they hoped to secure Paganini's attendance, when the money for both of the performances would be paid together next forenoon. The violinist having agreed to wait another evening upon the same terms, the business was proceeded with. By way of gulling Paganini still further, Seymour engaged him for a night in Kilmarnock upon the same conditions,, and it was advertised, but the good people of Kilmarnock becoming aware of the disappointment at Ayr, did not turn out, although Paganini, in hopes of Seymour making his appear-

ance, and getting at least the £50 short paid at Ayr, and at all events the Kilmarnock £100, was in attendance, but there was no house. Having thus lost by his engagement £250, without any chance of recovery, he left Kilmarnock a sadder, if not a wiser man.

It was omitted to state in the proper place that upon Seymour leaving the Ayr Theatre after the first night's performance, he decamped with above £100 in his pocket and was neither seen nor heard of until Paganini was fairly out of the way. When Seymour returned he happened to call upon me on business connected with the Kilmarnock Theatre, of which I was proprietor. I asked him if it was true that he only paid the great fiddler £50 and had kept out of the way, the public having feared he had drowned himself to get quit of the heavy responsibility of £250 hanging over his head. With true Irish nonchalance he replied, "All you have heard is quite correct, minus a drowning; but I never intended from the outset to pay Paganini any more that the £50 I gave him."

After this little escapade, Paganini would never "draw a bow" until he got his money, and yet he was destined to fall in some time afterwards with as slippery a customer as Seymour, in the person of a manager in a large provincial town in England, who engaged him for one night at a tempting sum; but having, as he said, no money to advance (it was, as will be seen, required for another purpose), he proposed to supply a strong box for each of the entrance doors in which all the money was to be deposited, the keys of which were to be held by Paganini.

This arrangement being satisfactory, the boxes were prepared and business proceeded with; but, instead of being the receptacle for gold and silver coin, the boxes were, by some secret contrivance, destined to be filled with copper, in the shape of a good quantity of "bawbees," with which the manager had plentifully supplied himself. Paganini, in his anxiety to ascertain how things were getting on in the cash boxes, took every opportunity that offered of running round to the front of the house, lifting the boxes, and, being satisfied with their individual weight, returning rejoicing to finish his professional labours. At the close of the performance he ordered a carriage to convey himself and the money boxes to his hotel, the boxes being carefully stowed away alongside of him; but his astonishment may well be conceived when, on opening them, he discovered the trick that had been played on him. On returning to the theatre he discovered that his friend, the manager, was off to America by a ship that would sail about the time the house was filled, and all the money drawn that was likely to come in.

I shall conclude by giving an outline of a rather comic affair that came off in Ayr Theatre, probably about fifty years ago. A well-known character, an Irishman, named Mike Hill, was introduced by some wags in the town to give a lecture on the "Potato Disease," which was just beginning to show itself; and Mike, who was more of the —— than fool, immediately advertised the lecture, which was, like Dr Hornbook, to explain to us "baith the disease' and what would mend it." He opened in the Theatre with a full house, but, of course, low prices, all classes being on the qui vive to see and hear a great, big, ignorant, vulgar, and impudent fellow, with a pure brogue "address the house." He commenced thus:—Ladies and Gentlemen my equals, and others (our party in the boxes wondering amongst ourselves to which party he meant us to belong), "this here disease," &c., &c., followed by a rigmarole kind of speech, in which many subjects, altogether foreign to that in hand, were introduced, to the infinite delight of the audience, whose unbounded applause served rather to encourage than otherwise the man with the bump of self-esteem sufficiently developed to continue his absurd lecture.

Mr Mike now informed his admiring patrons that, by way of conclusion to his address he would exhibit upon the stage a representation of an Irish family at dinner, where the blessed potato should prominently appear. Paddy himself at the head of the table, facing the audience, represented the honoured parent, while around him were arranged the numerous family of all ages, excepting the two youngest, his eldest daughter, approaching womanhood, occupying the lower end of the table, with her back to the audience, the 'auld respeckit mither," sitting upon a low stool in a corner at the front of the stage, with the two youngest squatted beside her. The "aiting" process began by ould Mike, with knife in hand, cutting small pieces of beef and abundance of "murphies," handing them around to the youngsters according to seniority, which they seemed greedily to devour without the aid of cutlery—the old lady, of course, coming in for her share. The opening of the drop scene discovered what is stated above, but, unfortunately in hauling it up there had been, unobserved by the stage manager, an ugly spike nail projecting from the roller, which caught hold of the young woman's dress, and, but for her own weight impeding its upward progress, she might have been hoisted to the top of the proscenium. Although no time was lost in getting the poor girl extricated from her humiliating position, yet the audience, instead of sympathising with her, indulged very improperly in roars of laughter. The dinner scene was, in consequence of this little laughable

affair, soon terminated, and ended, at the same time, such an evening's entertainment as may not often be witnessed in or out of London.

I have another, slightly different, version of this laughable scene, which, however, does not much affect its comicality. The entertainment afforded by Mike Hill was engineered by a few gentlemen who regularly met at 26 New Bridge Street, and the programme was drawn up over a cigar. The coterie—or committee I might call them—who organised the affair and accepted the responsibility for the rent of the theatre and other expenses, of course in their capacity of managers took the privilege of being behind the scenes during the evening, pulling the strings, and preventing the fun from flagging. Sometimes they acted as prompters, and did not fail with what material they had to make the entertainment a success. Keeping out of sight themselves, they could in many ways improve the occasion, and did so with much effect. While the curtain was down when the arrangements for the Irish dinner were in progress, one of the coterie, watching his opportunity when a tall, strapping girl with her back close to the drop scene and her skirt just resting on the roller, pulled the string, with a result which was not on the programme. As the scene began to rise, the committee of management, as well as Mike's assistants, bolted from the front; only the poor girl, who was fairly caught in the rolling process as the curtain was raised, was retained, affording a back view. The exposure was awful, more especially as the extremities were not particularly clean. The audience, thinking it was all in the bill of fare, simply roared. The cord for pulling up the curtain, with the extra weight now attached to it, broke, so the scene was a brief one. This is a fair illustration of the skittishness of the members of the Cigar Divan. In modern days we talk of Junior Conservatives and Junior Liberals while there is little junior about them except in their spirits. While there are many members under twenty or about it there are many more over forty. The practical jokers of fifty years ago were as a rule over forty, but the pranks they played would have been more creditable to actual juniors of half that age. I may mention one practical joke here as an illustration of how such grave seniors as our Town Councillors could manage it. It was about the November time when Councillors were all things to all men. The Deacons were giving their nies (most enjoyable affairs), and the Provost his annual dinner. This annual dinner, by the way, is still continued—a healthy survivor of the old

functions, which were pleasant to give, and of course pleasant to take. The Deacon's pies, however, are gone; why, it would be hard to say. Fine big sixpenny pies they were, with oysters in them, each just a jolly good supper; while the Deacon and his gentlemen friends enjoyed them with accompaniments which I won't pain my temperance friends by further alluding to. The domestic circles of each of the friends were also cheered by having two or three pies sent to them direct from the baker, who was furnished with a list of those to whom they were to be sent. Nor were the widows and orphans forgotten. Thus it happened that while the supper party did not exceed in number twenty or thirty, the order generally to the baker was a gross and a half of pies, showing a liberality and a prodigality of the old time well worthy of imitation. The Provost, however, did not mind the domestic circle of his guests. They duly arrived and had a jolly good dinner themselves, perhaps costing the host much more than the more profuse pie distribution where so many more were made happy. However, let me get to this special Provost's dinner, and the practical joke perpetrated at the cigar divan. The usual frequenters here had met, enjoying their weed and telling of some new thing, if there was such, or if not, probably they were coining something new. There were two Town Councillors present, one of whom was specially noted for his fiery temper, and with whom to differ was to be sent at once to a certain locality more famed for its extreme heat than for its comfort. Our hot tempered friend casually introduced the subject of the Provost's dinner, mentioning with the suspicion of a sneer that the Provost was getting uppish since he had taken unto himself his second wife. The invitation to dinner had been sent to him on a gilt-edged card, probably on the suggestion of his more advanced better half. It was a new departure this, and as such it was an indication that this forthcoming dinner was to be something extra. The two Councillors present, however, began to compare notes. As already mentioned, one was hot tempered, and the other was a wag, fond of a practical joke, so it is not difficult to guess who would come off worst in an encouter. The story is not a long one.

The wag was asked, "Have you got your invitation yet?"

"Oh, yes! I got it this morning."

"Indeed, I only got mine to-night. What can be the meaning of that?" (An indication of the temper rising).

"What night are you invited?"

"On Friday night," was the reply.

"Oh! Friday night, that's strange."

"What's strange about it? (was the surprised query, the query manifestly rising).

"I thought you would have had a Thursday invitation."

"What do you mean? Friday's the day."

"Oh! it's all right, but I'm asked for Thursday night, and I believe a few friends are asked to join the Council then at dinner."

"Do you mean tell me there are to be two dinners?"

"Yes," replied the wag quite coolly. "On Thursday night the Magistrates and the principal officials and a few Councillors and Deacons are invited, the dining room not being large enough to contain all on the same evening; but I thought you would have had a first night invitation."

"Go to ——" The hot-tempered Councillor was now in a white heat, and used language which can be imagined but not committed to paper, and went away, leaving behind him a sulphurous atmosphere, with a boast that he knew where he would have a better dinner both on Thursday and Friday than could be got at the Provost's.

He sent a refusal that same night.

Of course those left behind rather enjoyed the explosion, but were rather surprised as well that he had not been asked on Thursday instead of Friday.

"But there is no Thursday night dinner," intimated the wag, who had concocted the story.

"Do you mean to say you were trotting him?"

"Certainly. I only wanted to see if he would rise to the fly."

It may well be imagined the mirth was more hilarious afterwards.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Co-operative Stores.

Since the following article appeared among the Reminiscences a co-operative store has been erected in Ayr and seemingly doing a large business. It may or may not become a success, but in any case it does not affect the chapter which is here given. The views thereon expressed are adhered to, while the Reminiscences of 50 years ago of the Co-operative Store is correct in every respect.

In these modern days, it may be appreciated, and may add to the interest of the Reminiscences of Auld Ayr if I give a brief account of the co-operative store which existed in Ayr 50 years ago. It may point a moral and adorn a tale. Co-operation was not so well known then in connection with shopkeeping as it is now. It was not even dreamt of to have such colossal places of business with thousands of shareholders paying no income tax, while those with whom they were competing had to pay it, and submit to other inequalities as well. It will be difficult to explain why a business making, say, £1000 a year, competing with other businesses not making half that income, should yet escape paying income tax because the shareholders are numerous, while the legitimate trader who is being injured by them should have to pay. Individual enort is thereby crushed, or at least handicapped, and an injustice is created at which those who benefit by it would be the first to protest if it was exercised against them. We have no local Co-operative Societies in Ayr now. There is a branch from Kilmarnock doing some business, but I do not think it is to any great extent injuring our local independent traders. Without Co-operative opposition I make bold to say that no town is more advantageously supplied with family requirements. I have taken the trouble of comparing some price lists of our local merchants with the cheaper Co-operative lists, and certainly Ayr has quite good reason to be satisfied with the position of affairs. Whether this was equally so 50 years ago I can scarcely say. At all events, a Co-operative Society was started, and for a time it was a pronounced success. It will be interesting to read a brief history of this society, and possibly it may serve as a warning to others. It was denominated "The Ayr Economical Society." The capital consisted of 500 shares of 5s each, all subscribed. Though a business with a capital of £125 may have been of goodly proportions in those days, it would not be thought much of

now. There were a chairman, a secretary, and twelve of a committee to manage the concern, or rather to supervise the man and boy who constituted the staff of the undertaking. The salaries of the chairman and secretary were £6 each per annum, and the committee met every month and transacted business, and enjoyed a modest supper in return for their trouble, and I think there were other trifling emoluments, such as samples which travellers were always giving to those who could in any way influence traffic their way. As these meetings were always held in the society's shop on the Friday evenings after shop shutting, it was not to be wondered at if the children of the members of committee were well supplied with sweeties for the church on the following Sunday. The shop was in Main Street, nearly opposite Cuthbert's brewery (now Turner's), and a fair turnover was done, enabling a fair dividend to be paid on the 5s shares. Indeed the success was so pronounced that the 5s shares increased in value till they were worth 7s 6d, and the Society was induced to establish a branch in Wallacetown (with another man and boy as a staff) nearly opposite the Whig Kirk. An increase of capital was called for in 5s shares, but with 2s 6d of premium added, thereby making them of the same value as the original shares, and the Wallacetown branch was also for a time a pronounced success and the demand for shares so great that the number issued to each member had to be limited to four. This did not, however, prevent a member booking other four shares to his wife and the same to other members of his family. I think in the midst of this prosperity the chairman's and secretary's salaries were increased to £10 per annum each, and possibly the suppers of the members of committee were improved, and the increased number of orders would doubtless permit of more generous samples of goods being given. The prosperity continued for several years, and the original 5s shares were now being disposed of at 17s 6d and sometimes 20s. Dividends of 2s and 2s 6d per annum were frequently declared, indicating clearly that a good going profitable business was being carried on. A few hundred more shares were added, which were eagerly taken up, and another shop was opened in High Street, on the site of the premises now occupied by Johnson Brothers. At that time the building was low in the ceiling, very unlike the palatial erection now in that locality. The rental would be £12 or £14 per annum, and like the other branches in Newton and Wallacetown it was also prosperous. In a short time the original shares in the Society were market value for 32s each, the annual dividend sometimes reaching the total cost of the original share of 5s. I question much if any Co-

operative Society since that time has exhibited greater prosperity. All connected with the Society prospered. There were evil-minded people then as there are now who did not hesitate to insinuate that to become a manager of one of the Society's shops was a sure road to fortune, even with the small salaries which were then paid to them. After occupying the situation for two or three years they were all able to start business for themselves. The suspicion might have had some grounds had the business which they were managing not shown a profit quite up to the expectation of the committee and shareholders, but for a business concern to show such good returns, and at the same time leave a suspicion that the employees were plundering it, seemed a strain even to a suspicious mind. No sooner had one manager started in business for himself than a successor was easily found at the same moderate salary, and in course of time he was able to show that he too had flourished in connection with the Economical Society; perhaps solely because he had practised the strictest economy himself. In addition to economy I have no doubt, however, that the greater profits of those days contributed much to this success. The shareholders also did not grudge paying a good price seeing that the extra profit came back to themselves. The three shops, or stores, as they were called, continued to flourish for several years till the committee and management as a whole began to forget their strict economy, their very success inducing them to forget the cause of it. Places of business of such importance and yielding such handsome profits could, it was thought, afford better business premises. They could afford to pay more than £12 and £15 rents; besides it was thought that a central place of business of higher respectability would be an advantage, and it was resolved to attempt this. All previous extensions had led to increased income, and it was not difficult to induce the general body of shareholders to take another step forward, with the result that the premises now occupied by P. B. Hill, fishmonger, then newly erected, were taken as the headquarters of the Ayr, Newton, and Wallacetown Economical Society, and fitted up in a style which threw into the shade the premises of the other merchants in Ayr. Economy seemed to be forgotten. The manager, who did not think it beneath him to serve at the counter in his shirt sleeves, had now to keep his coat on, and had a private office to himself, handsomely furnished. I remember it well, and I am satisfied that the desk, chairs, book-safe, and furnishings generally in that private office would have cost much more than the total furnishings of the front shop of the society, including counter, scales,

weights, and drawers of the whole establishment. Only a few members of committee remonstrated, protesting that the furnishings provided for the manager's private office were at least equal to those provided for the factor of one of the largest estates in the county. It was darkly hinted that though his salary was small he could easily make it quite in keeping with his surroundings. The value of the shares were now at their highest, and a few of the more prudent holders disposed of those in their possession. I knew of one who held in his family 16 shares which originally cost him £5 altogether, and he sold the whole at £27 10s. During the time he held them he received in dividend no less than £24, a very fair return for economic management. The attempt, however, to get into an upward grade led to an opposite result. The first stocktaking after the new shop was put into working order showed the profits to be nil. Of course this was accounted for by a statement that much of the outlay incurred in the new place was charged against revenue. This was so far satisfactory, but it left a doubt, and next stocktaking did not make things much better. This led to a considerable change in the committee of management, who of course got all due credit when things were in a flourishing condition, and were lauded for their excellent management, but now when they had evidently fallen on evil days they had to bear the brunt. The new Committee found that things were in a much worse state even than had been represented. To prevent a wreck, the ship was to be lightened. The Wallacetown shop was represented as going back for some time, so it was disposed of, and the manager there promptly relieved them of the burden. It paid well enough after that. The other shops were also disposed of. The grand new central shop was reserved to do all the business. The Economic shops were thrown overboard, and the premises which actually caused the wreck were retained. The Economic Society had gone up like a rocket, and it came down like a stick. A very few years intervened between the departure of the economic principles of the Society for the grand new warehouse till the catastrophe took place. It was wound up. The party who bought the sixteen shares at £27 10s never received a penny of dividend, but lost the full amount, and I think he had to pay several calls to make up the deficiency. A solemn lesson not to take shares in a Co-operative Society with a view to get larger returns, and the danger of getting nothing but to pay up deficiencies, in many cases well deserved, by people who interfered with businesses belonging to other people. I do not think there is much danger of a Co-operative Society making headway in Ayr now. In

the first place, because there is not the least need for it, we are very well supplied already; and in the second place, the memory of the Economic Society of fifty years ago still remains. It made money by strict parsimony, which would not be practised now; they had no opposition to contend with, and it came to grief when it was faced with individual effort not even so strong as they would have to face now. It was an awkward move on the part of the Society to become extravagant in their management at the very time when profits were becoming much reduced. After all, it was a wonder it existed so long as it did, for the old careful managers who had inaugurated it died out and others took their places, more intent on securing little gratuities to themselves than in promoting the general good.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Ayrshire Agricultural Association.

To know "Auld Ayr," even to a very limited extent, is also to know the Ayrshire Agricultural Association. It has now nearly reached the respected age of three-score and ten, and its career has been one of uninterrupted progress, and, to quote a somewhat stale remark—

"What it shall hereafter be,
Is hid from mortal eyes."

It would have been somewhat remarkable if Ayrshire, one of the greatest agricultural counties in Scotland, had not a great Agricultural Association, and to all intents and purposes no one can say in this respect it has fallen short. There has been a continuity in the management, which perhaps accounts for its prosperity. From the first the great landlords of the county have been among its best supporters. They have had many able and willing supporters. There have been very few changes even in the secretaryship. Mr John M'Murtrie, the first secretary, was succeeded by his son James, who a few years ago was followed by Mr Howie, the worthy son of a worthy sire, combining most appropriately the holder of that office with the name of one of the greatest supporters of the exhibition, and one of the greatest prize-takers. No doubt there is something in luck, but without "guid guiding" success is seldom so unqualified as it has been with the Ayrshire Agricultural Association. Annually the show draws increasing thousands of visitors, and every year there are increasing attractions to justify the attendance. The Cattle Show and the Races are the two public events of the year which for the past sixty years have been recognised as time-marks. The new year is past, and there is a reasonable attempt to sing with some reality, "Gloomy Winter's noo awa," when the agricultural exhibition puts in an appearance. The Ayr merchants look upon the event as the opening of the season, and following it we have our summer visitors, some of much more value than others, and "the season is on." This continues till the end of September when the Races are held, bringing also thousands of visitors, leaving thousands of pounds—all needed—in the town, and then the season is closed. The dull season then sets in, and the income tax collector would have a much smaller return to make if the profits of the summer season were not much in excess of the winter. Long experience, however, has taught Ayr folk to put the good and bad together, and those

who are inclined to grumble, and always wear a long face, might also profit by that experience to put the best face on it and help themselves to make the town more prosperous. It is those who do least for the town think that the town should do most for them; indeed, it may be taken as a truism that the greatest complainers are those who have least reason to complain.

The Ayrshire Agricultural Association has been prosperous and successful from the first. The Association started well, and fifty or sixty years ago was with good reason looked upon as a prosperous institution. The climate, always doubtful, at the time in which the show is held is still more variable than at other periods of the year. Still good fortune has attended it. About one in ten years seems to be about the number of wet year attendances. From the first it was encouraging to see that there has been a growing appreciation of the efforts of the Society to benefit all who are engaged in agriculture. Farmers find that it is to their advantage to exhibit. Competition stimulates them to do their best, and the consequence is that the quality of the exhibits is kept up to a high standard. And as the tendency is to raise all the farm stock and produce to this standard, agriculture generally is carried on with greater efficiency, and so becomes more remunerative. Moreover, the example of those who exhibit has an influence on their less enterprising neighbours, with the result that the usefulness of the Society extends to the whole district. The necessity of maintaining the best breeds of cattle is universally admitted, and these annual competitions have had a good effect.

It is pleasant to look back and compare the names on former prize-lists with those of the present day and to find how many are the same. There were Howies and Murrays and Wilsons then as now, fathers or grandfathers of the present prize-takers. Their example at the same time stirred up competition, and the local parish shows have brought out competitors who, but for the encouragement given at these smaller concerns, would never have ventured to compete at the great County exhibition. It is only a little over twenty years since Prestwick Show was first held. Previous to that time there was scarcely an entry at Ayr from the parishes connected with it. Now we find prize-takers even far up in the Derby and in other classes, testifying to the power of having small beginnings. To the fostering encouragement of the Ayrshire Association may be attributed the greatly increased value of Ayrshire cattle. Fifty or sixty years ago it was a very good cow which brought ten pounds at a sale. By reason of being a prize-

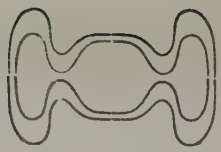
taker it sometimes reached £20, and at length with wonder and great shaking of heads occasionally a wealthy farmer, or I should say one gifted with both sense and means, would buy a specially good one at £50. It is not so many years ago since the late Mr John Murray, of Carston, carried off the blue ribbon (the Derby) at Ayr Show, and reluctantly sold his first prize cow at £100. I remember the amazement which was expressed at such a price being given, and the insinuation that the purchaser had more means than sense, which nettled old Mr Murray considerably. He at once went to the purchaser and offered to relieve him of his purchase, not wishing it to be thought that because it was the first hundred pound Ayrshire ever sold that it was not worth the money paid for it. Again this year the granddaughter of Mr Murray's has carried off the blue ribbon, adding another proof of the continuity of the competitors in families. There were few better judges of cattle than the old man and his son John. The purchaser, however, conclusively proved afterwards that he was not an inferior judge. He declined to give up his bargain, and had no reason to regret his decision. Since that time even higher prices have been paid, and high priced Ayrshire cattle are now shipped to all parts of the world, and much of this trade is due to the influence of the association. It is a trite saying that if it does not pay to rear a good animal it won't pay to rear a bad one. While it is natural to suppose that the Ayrshire cow is the great feature of Ayrshire agricultural enterprise, horses and sheep do not lag behind. In this respect also the great annual exhibitions for the past three score and ten years have yielded good fruit. Fostered by the association and by landlords, as well as by district societies, and, it is fair to add, a willing tenantry, horse and sheep breeding have not been neglected. If we have not associated an Ayrshire name with any of the classes at the annual show, Ayrshire buyers and sellers have always continued to keep well in the front in bringing forward high priced animals, and while keeping up their own stock, have exported thousands.

The Agricultural Machinery Department at the annual exhibition has always been a great feature. Farmers, as a class, are not too much given to enterprise. They stick to old customs greedily. They believe too much in the idea that what was good enough for their grandfathers is good enough for them. They approach every new invention with suspicion, and the enterprise of our agricultural implement makers does not meet with the response it deserves. Still much improvement is taking place, and every annual exhibition is tending to make them "wake up." It was so half

a century ago. We had the usual cry of dull times (when was that cry not in evidence?). Rents were always too high; the weather was always deplorable; seasons were always changing, and farming was aye the most unremunerative business on the face of the earth. It was better fifty years ago than now, a poor compliment to the success of the Agricultural Associations—so the present state of matters must be bad enough.

Yet in comparing sixty years ago with the present time I cannot say all has been a matter of advance. The Agricultural Association is not to blame, but farmers themselves. Time was when Ayrshire butter was quoted in the market as the best. Dunlop cheese was famed also. Irish, or any foreign butter, was then considered of an inferior quality, and American cheese was sold sometimes at half the price of the home product. How do we stand now? Is our butter the best? Has our cheese kept the first position in the market? What also of our poultry and our supply of eggs, which ought to be one of the most profitable and easiest to take care of on any farm. The foreign supply is taking millions a year out of the country which ought to be retained in it. Half-a-century ago eggs were much cheaper, and even then their production was considered remunerative. In the dairy department we may well say to our home farmer, "Wake up!" There are isolated efforts being made which indicate that something is being done to remove what is really a stigma. There is a sign of some progress, which justifies the hope that poultry will become more profitable in the future, but there has been too long delay. There is also much room for improvement in the making of butter, and in packing it for conveyance by road, rail or steamer to market; if there were not, we should not have such large quantities imported into the United Kingdom from Denmark and other countries. Complaint is frequently made that the home butter contains too much water, that it is not always scrupulously clean, and that when it reaches the market buyers and consumers do not find it as attractive as that which comes from abroad. It is well known that there is on several farms butter which could not be surpassed, but there is a lack of uniformity in the general quality, and the inferior kinds do harm to the butter trade of the whole country, for they are frequently, though wrongly, regarded as fair samples. Regarding cheese it is evident that if we are ever to regain our position as supplying the best cheese, there must be a complete change. It is not for a townsman to say what that change should be; sufficient for us that we are only playing second or third fiddle as far as quality is concerned. It is for the Agricul-

tural Association to pay more attention to dairy produce. In all other departments they have done well. Why should they lag behind here? Next year the Association will celebrate its three-score and ten years' existence. Let this be its effort for the future.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Christmas Then and Now.

The heading of this chapter is perhaps a misnomer, for, to all intents and purposes, about 1850 there was practically no Christmas in Scotland, or at least in "Auld Ayr." I am referring of course to Protestants, who then more than now comprised the bulk of the population. The name appeared in the Belfast Almanac, the official calendar of the day, in which it was mentioned among the holidays and other special days, applying more to England and Ireland, but in very few instances was any other notice taken of Christmas. I think the Banks were shut, and we had a sort of hazy idea that Christmas was in England similar to the New Year holiday we observed here as the great event of the year. As nearly as I can recollect a few shops exhibited some holly in their windows. The bakers also had attractive exhibitions of currant buns, shortbread, and seed cakes, but these were looked upon more as forerunners of New Year's day than as a celebration of Christmas. The poulterers also had a little extra on this day. Every well-to-do family made it a sort of annual custom, which should not be departed from, to have a turkey for their dinner on Christmas and a goose usually did duty on New Year's day. The great holiday, however, was the 1st of January; I believe even old New Year's Day (the 13th of January) was more taken notice of than the 25th of December. But the grand displays now made in all our merchants' places of business were then quite unknown.

I have incidentally mentioned poulterers, so I may take them first as the purveyors par excellence of our Christmas and New Year dinners. Messrs P. B. Hill and James M'Creadie were the only two in business then. Mr Glendinning came later. They are more numerous now, and it is possible that the one doing the smallest business does as much as either of these two did then. The business of only one of these still exists, and the old name—P. B. Hill—is also continued, and certainly is now doing as much as the two which existed fifty years ago did then. The old establishment has advanced with the times. It is worthy of note, however, that then a large portion of the fish trade was transacted on the street. The fishermen's wives took an active part in business then as well as the fishermen, and at the Fish Cross the baskets of fish exhibited were very rapidly disposed of. The most respectable of the inhabitants did not think it infra dig to purchase

their fish from the wives of the toilers of the sea, who to a great extent thus disposed of the fruits of their husbands' toil. There were no supplies of fish from Aberdeen then. Ayr bay provided all the fish we required. Instead of importing any we were able to export a considerable quantity. I do not wish to belittle the respectable fishmongers and poulterers of fifty years ago, but when I look at the fine places of business now and the enterprise which is so visible in the trade, the comparison with the old times is much in favour of our modern system.

The sale of fish at the Fish Cross in the open air naturally draws my attention to another business then conducted in a similar way, viz., the sale of fruits and vegetables. At that time the whole sales of fruit, flowers, vegetables, potatoes, etc., was carried on in the High Street, rows of carts and barrows ranging side by side from the Old Bridge end up to the Star Hotel. They arrived early in the morning, took up their stance, and gradually got reduced in number as their stock became exhausted. The width of a decent footpath was left between the backs of the carts and the shops then existing, the fronts of the carts extending to near the centre of the street, and there the sales were conducted. I wonder what would be thought of that now when a row is kicked up on the one side if the frontage is obstructed, and on the other side when any merchant projects his merchandise a few inches beyond his line of front. Gardeners and farmers in the neighbourhood sent in their roots, vegetables, and fruit, which were freely sold for cash. There was no middleman's profit, the producer and consumer being thus brought into immediate contact. There was not even a shop rent to pay. I think there was a penny or twopence of custom exacted by the burgh. These customs maintained the streets and police, and tolls maintained the roads and bridges, and municipal rates were practically unknown. Changed times now, it will be said; and a penny went a much longer way in everything then than now. A penny expended in fruit then enabled a boy to jump with joy. I question if sixpence would command as much now. Verily now we have more grandeur, but really we do pay for it. The trade, however, is much changed in other respects as well as in the price of fruit. The neighbouring gardeners cannot nearly provide the fruit, flowers, and vegetables now required. America, California, and even Australia, have to send shiploads of fruit to our shores, all of which are readily used, and the heavy carriage added to the price of the fruit. Shop rents also have to be provided at much more expense than attended the primitive

mode of selling in the street. Prices consequently are high, notwithstanding the competition which exists, and I daresay we are more particular as to quality. The consumption of fruit also is to be highly commended. It is one of the wholesome luxuries which bring no evil in its train, therefore no one can grudge the increase of the number of fruit shops, and their substitution for the cart and barrow used half a century ago. The great cities then could not present fruit shops as handsome and tastefully decorated as the fruit emporiums, both in Ayr and Newton, occupied by Mr M'Culloch and others.

Passing from the fruits and vegetables, fish and game, I naturally come to the more material necessity of life—bread, which, in its various forms, multiplied to an enormous extent, bulks now much more largely in the public eye. Even with the air of machinery, there are many more bakers now, all with much larger establishments, and all vieing with each other, not so much for price as quality. There was such a thing as home baking then, which is now almost entirely neglected. I will not attempt to discuss the question of whether this is advantageous or not. Speaking from a somewhat impaired memory, the bakers then in Ayr were Messrs Dickie, Kennedy, M'Hutcheon, M'Call, M'Jannet, Miller, Livingstone, and Daniel Wright. In Newton there were Messrs Wright & Son and James Stewart, and in Wallacetown the only one was Mr M'Kinnon, besides the Economical Society, with its branches, which society baked their own bread. The confectionery and pastry baking was entirely in the hands of Mr Adam Nicol, except in a few instances where the bakers undertook a little pastry baking as well. Taken altogether, the pastry was a very limited commodity. Pies and tarts, with a very few cakes, comprised the whole fancy baking then in Ayr. The pies baked by the Wrights and Miller were dux, and one of the few bakers in these days has a descendant still in business here, with the high reputation for pies continued. Mr M'Kinnon in Wallacetown had a high reputation for spiced cakes, so famed that they were patronised by Royalty, and that business is now successfully carried on by Mr Tuton in the same premises. Of the old established bakeries in 1850 some have disappeared entirely, while of the others there are worthy successors. The businesses of Mr M'Call and Mr Wright still remain in the same families. Mr Gavin Girdwood, who succeeded Mr M'Hutcheon, carried on that business, and is now succeeded by his sons. Mr Galbraith succeeded to the business then carried on by Mr Livingston, but it is a very different business now in extent.

All the others have practically lapsed, and new businesses have been built up in different localities. It speaks volumes for Ayrshire bakers when we find in a trade journal ("The Baker and Confectioner") complimentary notices of the bakeries of Messrs Brown, Galbraith, Girdwood, and M'Call, of Ayr.

It is the pastry baking, however, where the greatest strides have been made, and which to a great extent has transformed all our old-fashioned bakeries. The confectionery business is now almost completely merged in that of the grocer, who conducts it to great advantage. There are few grocers now who do not make a greater display of confections than their old friend Adam Nicol ever dreamed of. I should mention that in the days I write of there was a firm of Fleming & Logan, nominally confectioners, but whose business really was much of a restaurant, with confections filling up the shop windows. They had shops in Sandgate Street and High Street. The former is now transformed into the Prince Albert Bar, while the latter was long carried on by the late Mr John Goudie, till he transferred his successful business to the palatial premises (the largest in Ayr), now occupied by his son at 231 High Street. Ayr is now not only the County town, doing a large town and country business, but a great popular resort; and it is not to be wondered that, with the demand which has arisen for the services of the purveyor, the supply has been such as to meet the demand. Bakers in the olden days thought little about the purveying for visitors. In addition to the hotels and public-houses in 1850, there were practically no restaurants. I think there are nearly fifty places now where a comfortable cup of tea may be had and other refreshments. Out of these, there are at least a dozen where excellent dinners are purveyed in a style equal to any city restaurant. The accommodation provided in Mr Goudie's is nothing short of any provided in the largest city, while the Ayr Coffee House at the end of the Old Bridge (Mr and Mrs Bowden) will compare favourably with any establishment of the kind in Scotland. Ayr, it must be confessed, was very sadly behind in this respect fifty years ago. The art of purveying is now as well known in Ayr as in any part of the Kingdom. Fifty or sixty years it was not so. It was not uncommon to have a very ordinary dance, supper or dinner purveyed from a distance. The King's Arms and Mr Goudie had it all their own way, and since there was little competition no great effort was made to depart from the usual rut. Firms changed and progressed, and with the change our old restaurants progressed. They

certainly have progressed with the times, and no town is now better supplied.

I have mentioned that all the bakers in Ayr are now pastry bakers as well, and sending out cakes and delightful pastries which were quite unknown half a century ago even in the best shops. It would be unfair, however, not to accord a word of praise to Fleury Meng, who commenced business in Ayr upwards of twenty years ago, and has done so much to give us the highest class of pastry that can be produced anywhere. He commenced in a small establishment in Newmarket Street, but in a very short time he acquired such a reputation as placed him in the front rank of purveyors. Nothing can excel the recherche toothsome dainties, which delight all, young and old, who visit this place of business. His name now is well known far beyond the confines of Ayr, and he has fitted up one of the most comfortable and elegant places of resort to be seen anywhere. Our ideas of such a restaurant, at the period I am writing of, would have been that such a resort could only have been established for millions. Newcastle and Sunderland have each received this favour, and on a large scale, from Mr Meng, and in these places, as in Ayr, he has also taken first place. It may be truly said of him he has achieved success entirely because he deserved it. Emulation has done much in this way in Ayr. All now aim at being at least equal, while others, though now in opposition, pay an unintentional compliment by announcing that they have come from Mr Meng. Imitation is certainly the sincerest form of flattery, but to add to that as a recommendation that they are professedly imitators is the essence of flattery.

While giving the bakers credit for a very fine display in thus commemorating Christmas and making their windows so attractive with Christmas fare such as never was aimed at in bygone days, yet I think the palm must be awarded to the grocers for tasteful decorations, which surpass even the most attractive bakers' windows. The Christmas cakes certainly look very well, and there are some very attractive designs, showing an excellence of handiwork and good taste worthy of the highest admiration. After all, however, the grocers, in several cases, outstrip them with a show quite as appropriate to the season. Cakes adapt themselves well to decorative purposes, and buns and pastry in every variety of form and colour can be arranged to make a very attractive show. Still the grocers have it, for aided by sprigs of holly interspread among bottles, chocolate boxes, confections, crackers, and varieties of preserved fruits, they have in many cases

exhibited great taste and ingenuity in arranging their goods to make a brilliant exhibition. I dare not mention names of those whom I think deserve special credit. What might seem flattery would certainly be put down for that, and in many cases would be misunderstood. Favourable notices are often said to be only returns for favours received or favours expected. Those who entertain this belief have no idea of the costiveness of their fellow men. There is a smug complacency about men in business; when praise is awarded they take it as their due—but when they are neglected or even damned with faint praise, it is then we hear of it, and woe to the scribe who would dare to be honest enough to tell them the truth, and even insinuate that though what they did was fairly good yet it might have been much better. To condemn, however, is a different matter. Then they pour on you the vials of their wrath. In their eyes no rewards are to be allowed for favourable notices, but for the other forms nothing but punishment is thought of. The hope of reward is therefore no incentive, but the fear of punishment is there in all the strongest Calvinistic certainty. The object I have in view at present is to compare the things existing now in connection with the Christmas time with things as they existed upward of half a century ago, and certainly the comparison is interesting enough. Practically the grocers and provision merchants, whether combined with the wine and spirit trade or not, afford a most interesting comparison with the merchants who conducted their business long ago. Christmas is, of course, a special season. There is a special spurt on to make the most of the season, and in the midst of a dull period there is a brief time (a holiday burst) when business is brisk. They are all anxious to make the most of it, hence the extra decorations of the shops with the tinsel and glitter, and all the colours of the rainbow, and the arrangements in contrast, and every conceivable article with any distinction about it is even more than usually bedecked. I remember the old grocery warehouses of fifty years ago. I think the word warehouse was then not known in Ayr; that came later. Shopkeepers' wives then did not object to the word shop, and a shopkeeper was a man of business entitled to some respect, and he got it. Latterly, however, the keeping of a shop has been thought to be something plebeian; a warehouse is better, and an office is better still. There is something professional about an office which raises the owner above the commonality of those who earn their living by their head or their hands. Truth to tell, however, shops were only shops in those days and nothing

more. No plate glass windows, no high ceilings; a decent door 8 feet by 3 feet 6 inches, and a window on each side of it 6 feet by 4 feet 6 inches, and at least sixteen panes of glass in each window, constituted a high-class shop, and the great majority were much under that. It is a very ordinary shop now which cannot boast of much higher ceilings, large plate glass windows, and electric light, and all the modern embellishments which indicate an up to date business. And yet I know some of these businesses long ago emanated in premises where you could touch the roof when inside of them, and were in a great many respects inferior to those places of business in out of the way localities now, where five pounds sterling could have purchased the whole contents of the shop. Yet in these days the merchants of Ayr in their very common looking premises comfortably reared a large family, and when gathered to their fathers, could leave behind them, as the result of their labours, accumulated means rising easily to be counted by five figures. Probably some men with showier premises won't leave as much now; and it is a pity, for really I think those who encourage trade by providing for themselves first rate premises to transact their business, and make an effort to live themselves by helping others to live as well are more deserving of making fortunes than those who made their money in holes and dens which now would not pass a modern Dean of Guild Court. The sights which our modern grocery and provision warehouses present are remarkably pleasant and attractive, and at present there are many premises where there is an exhibition of taste which could not be dreamed of some years ago. I may be asked to name some of them, and asked to say who I would place first, second, and third. I believe I have a fair credit for bravery. I even get the credit of being possessed of some pluck. I hope, however, that this is chastened with some common sense, so I decline to place one of two and displace a dozen. "I fear no foe," but I fear a host, and am not inclined to face a formidable phalanx of merchants who all think well of themselves—too well to permit of the idea that any are better. All I say is—"See our advertising columns." The best merchant and the man most likely to please you and give you the best value is the merchant who intimates that he is willing—indeed, anxious—to do business with you. He advertises this, and he decorates his premises to attract you, and he gives you the best value to induce you to continue your favour. I, therefore, do not point out to you the best merchant and the most attractive premises, but refer you to the advertising columns

of the "Observer." There you will find those who have improved their business premises to make them so superior to what they were 50 years ago.

Ayr has reason to think well of its merchants. In no town or city are the licensed and unlicensed trades so well attended to. No wonder the Co-operative Societies do not invade the Auld Toon, excepting to do good to themselves in particular and to the great bulk of the population in general. Prices are keener cut, quality is as much an object to be attended to, civility and attention are freely given, and, as I have already mentioned, the business premises are as excellent as can be found anywhere. If all the business of the town was as well conducted as the grocery and provision business in Ayr we would have good reason to be congratulated. Ayr may be said to be famous for more than its "honest men and bonnie lasses"; probably, however, grocers are supposed to be included in its honest men.

Drapers, dressmakers, and tailors also will compare favourably with those of 50 years ago. In the Christmas season, to carry out our comparison of now and then, the change is specially noticeable. There were only two drapers then whose premises would bear any comparison with the handsome drapers' premises we have now. But in making these remarks, there is a more wonderful change which I may refer to, though in the present joyous season anything approaching the dismal or the melancholy I would fain avoid. The change I refer to is even more in the personality of our merchants than in the business premises. In looking over a Post Office Directory of 1851—exactly fifty-three years ago—I do not find the name of a father or even a grandfather of any of our present drapers or grocers. These two businesses comprise about half of the whole merchants in Ayr at present, and yet the merchants of those days have not left a single descendant now carrying on the same business. There are a few instances in other trades where an old business is carried on by a direct descendant, but even these may be counted on one's fingers. Among grocers and drapers, however, not one remains, and when we talk now of an old-established business, it means one which has been carried on by successors not lineal descendants of the party who established the business.

Possibly the merchants of those days accumulated fortunes, retired, and became "bloated aristocrats," with their families, and left or sold their business to strangers, and eschewed all business connections in the future, not

an uncommon mode of recognising the ladder which enabled them to climb to fortune. Quite as likely, however, there was another cause for thus leaving their business behind them for strangers to take up and not their families. Possibly they saw the labour and worry attending the making of a living by these businesses and so little return for it that they put their sons to other callings in the hope that a better return would then be had for their labour. Be the reason what it may it is singular that old established businesses, such as many I could mention in Ayr, have not been followed by sons or grandsons. The honourable exceptions in other businesses are few, and I can only wonder at the fact that they are not more numerous.

While this is so, however, there has been no reason for regret so far as the interests of the public are concerned. No town has more energetic drapers as well as grocers than Ayr. We may regret the want of the old names, but the men of to-day are in no way behind them in attention to the wants of their customers, in energy in carrying on an increased business, and in fair and manly competition with each other, and with competitors elsewhere. In comparing the shops of drapers now with those of half a century ago, for the sake of old times I regret to have to admit that comparisons are odious. The easy going tailors and clothiers, drapers and dressmakers, are not now to be found. We certainly dress better, and our wardrobes are much better filled; the demand may have increased the supply. I am afraid, however, the tempting supply has also increased the demand. The advertising columns of the "Observer" bear witness to the willingness to supply and to meet all wants, and the shows made in the fine large drapers' shop windows now so common in Ayr testify to the ability of their owners to meet all wants. The quality and excellent taste is visible, and there is no need to go elsewhere. Even in the matter of cheapness, local competition is quite up to the mark. I remember in my youth, the desire for cheapness would cause many runs into Glasgow. B. Hyam was the great advertiser then. A full suit for 30s, a top coat for half a guinea, and a pair of trousers for 7s 6d were his common prices. They certainly were low, but they were dear enough. We are willing to pay more now and get much better value, but we need not go elsewhere for it. The Christmas displays at present go a long way to prove the go-ahead spirit as compared with the days which are gone. Our merchants are using the best means to achieve success—that is, to deserve it, and they have all my best wishes.

I might enlarge my comparison by referring to the premises of chemists, fleshers, hatters, hosiers, and shoemakers, but I need not. All compare favourable with those of old. All more or less make a Christmas display, and vie with each other in elegance. Certainly, long ago, I remember no such attempts were made, and all fully illustrate the progress of the present day.

There is one business, however, which in the way of comparison almost dwarfs the rest. I remember well the hairdressers of 1850. Let me speak kindly of the departed. There were three who made a precarious living. People then shaved themselves, except on very rare occasions. Haircutting was of a very primitive nature. I think there was some home haircutting as well as home baking. A somewhat fashionable style of haircutting consisted of placing a bowl over the head and cutting all the hairs which protruded over it. This was known as the bowl-cut, and was performed expeditiously and did not involve much artistic work. Moustaches did not come into fashion till after the inauguration of the Volunteer movement, so there was less art in the way of shaving and hairdressing. The face presented a fair surface for a shave, and the bowl secured an even cut of the hair round the head, so no wonder that barbers were only barbers in those days, and were limited in numbers. With the advance of science, however, and railways, electricity, and sanitation (yes, sanitation has something to do with it), hairdressing has undergone a transformation. Mr L. Le Clair was not known then! He is known now! To him we are indebted for the great change which has taken place. To secure a coiffure, there is now no need to go a distance; Ayr (not only the town but the county as well) can be as well supplied here as in London or in Paris. There are now sixteen in the business—a big change in fifty years—several having hived off from Mr Le Clair's establishment, and all seemingly doing a large business. Several of their windows at this season add to the charms of Christmas, while there was nothing of this in the olden time. In this department Mr Le Clair has certainly made a great revolution, and made at the same time a good position which has been well maintained.

One more change I may notice, and here I leave shops behind. Christmas in our Scotch churches is changed. Fifty years ago it was not recognised in any way. Scotch Presbyterianism is certainly is this respect making a great advance; it is only a pity a similar advance has not been made in other respects in all the churches. In Scotland, at least, the necessity seems growing to have a National

Presbyterian Church, instead of being frittered away among so many petty fighting denominations. Sixty years ago the great Disruption was going on with all the bad feeling it generated. A turmoil has again recently arisen, not adding to the honour and glory of the Church. Could not the genuine Christmas spirit be imparted to the churches as zealously as to our places of business, and "Peace on earth goodwill towards men" be more generally observed? In many cases this is a mockery, more so in denominations than anywhere else. Will other sixty years roll past before we have the much to be desired change?

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Supplementary.

I cannot close these Reminiscences which have probably been extended unnecessarily, without adding a reference to several members of the community who may not have had the prominence they deserved. The following extracts from the "Observer," taken at different dates, giving notices of these may be sufficient and be taken as supplementary to the Reminiscences and rendering them more complete. I add them without further comment.

An Old Minister.

Those who take an interest in old people, as well as old buildings, may well have their attention drawn to the intimation of the death of the parish minister of Dalserf. The brief notice in the daily papers only tells us that, "At Dalserf Manse on Tuesday morning the Rev. Dr Rorison, minister of the parish, died in his 81st year." The deceased was ordained in 1850, and acted as assistant to Dr Black, Barony Parish, Glasgow. He was introduced to the church and parish of Dalserf in 1851, and when he celebrated his jubilee in May, 1901, he received handsome testimonials. Dr Rorison received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from his alma mater, Glasgow University, on 17th April, 1900. He took a deep interest in the welfare of the parishioners, and for twenty years was chairman of the Parochial Board." The interest attached to this announcement will attract more than usual attention in this locality. Dalserf, to the great majority, is a place unknown. The deceased minister, however, forms an interesting link with Ayrshire, especially with Ayr and the Land of Burns. There are many yet living who will remember his father, the Rev. Dr Rorison, of Stair. He was a worthy old minister who will figure in the reminiscences of many who recall the history of the middle of the last century. It will add to this interest when we mention that the deceased on his mother's side was a grandson of Dr Peebles, the first minister of Newton. What memories does this bring up? It takes us back to the latter part of the previous century, when Burns, interested in a heresy hunt, includes in his satire entitled "The Kirk's Alarm," a number of the principal clergymen of the time, such as Dr Peebles, as "Poet Willie," "Daddy Auld," and "Dalrymple Mild." Allowing only thirty years for each succeeding

generation gives us many generations since the days of Burns. But when we come to octogenarians it is interesting to see that we have still among us several whose grandfathers were contemporaries of our national bard. Dr Rorison is perhaps amongst the last of those, and few have had such distinct connection with these old times.

The Late Colonel Hay-Boyd.

We regret to announce the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Hay-Boyd, of Townend, Symington, which took place at his Ayr residence, 1 Wellington Square, on Monday evening. A few weeks ago Colonel Hay-Boyd, while at Dornal, had an apoplectic seizure, but recovered sufficiently to be removed to Ayr. He seemed to be progressing favourably, but on Sunday he had another attack, from which he did not rally. The Colonel's familiar figure will be missed in Ayr and by a large circle of friends throughout the county. The deceased was the only son of Captain Francis Hay, of the 34th Regiment. In 1859 he assumed the name of Boyd on the death of his uncle, Mr William Hay-Boyd, He was married in 1864 to Mary Adeline, youngest daughter of the late Colonel Charles Somerville M'Alester of Loup and Kennox. As an officer of the 20th Regiment he went through the Crimean War, and held the medal for the campaign, with clasps for Alma, Inkerman, Balaclava, and Sebastopol, and also the Turkish medal. He retired from active service as major, and was afterwards intimately identified with the Volunteer movement in Ayrshire as Lieutenant-Colonel. He took a warm interest in the affairs of the County of Ayr, and was a Deputy-Lieutenant, a Justice of the Peace, a Commissioner of Supply, and a member of County Council. He was also widely known as an excellent all-round sportsman. An excellent shot and a keen follower of hounds, he also took an active interest in horse racing, being one of the oldest members of the Western Meeting. An owner of horses, he very often appeared in the saddle at Ayr Races in National Hunt flat races, and when his colours, crimson jacket and black cap, were first past the post he was always sure of a great ovation. Col. Hay-Boyd is survived by his only daughter, who is the wife of the Rev. H. G. Roberts, vicar of Spratton, Northamptonshire.

The Late Bailie Young.

(Died 4th November, 1890.)

Another of our most distinguished citizens born in the last century has been removed by death. It is upwards of two years since Bailie Young left Ayr, and though upwards of ninety years of age then, physically and mentally his vigour seemed almost unimpaired. He then went to reside with his daughter in Auchterarder, but six months ago the weight of four score and ten years began to tell, and for upwards of a fortnight he was confined to his bed prior to his death, which took place on Tuesday last. Very few men have reflected so much credit on their native town as did Bailie Young, and for many years he gave employment to hundreds in the old Vulcan Foundry; a work which he raised by his own indomitable energy and genius from a very small beginning to be one of the foremost in the county. Machines of various kinds, remarkable in many respects, have found their way from this work to every quarter of the globe, and though it is closed now, very much to the regret of the whole community, Newtonians especially recollect with pride the great concern carried on so successfully for years in their midst. Bailie Young entered the Town Council in 1873, and retired from it about eight years ago, having been a magistrate almost the whole time. No more independent Bailie ever sat on the bench, and he was a terror to evil-doers, irrespective of their position in society. During an active life, coming into contact with so many, holding decided views socially and politically, almost from necessity, he gave offence to many. It is almost impossible to avoid making enemies at times, but the greatest compliment we can pay the deceased is that when he left Ayr he left not one behind him. To-day he was buried in the Old Church Yard. The town bell tolled during the hour in which the remains were conveyed from Ayr Station to the place of interment. The Magistrates and Council, preceded by the halberdiers and a great many friends, attended the funeral, while almost all the shops on the way suspended business for a time. The response to the request of the Provost that this should be done was most gratifying, and testifies more than words can do to the respect in which the late Bailie Young was held.

The Late Adam Brackenridge.

In our obituary columns to-day we notice with much regret the intimation of the death of Mr Brackenridge. By his death another link with the past is broken, and the oldest official connected with the Burgh has been removed. Deceased has been connected with the Town Clerk's office while eleven successive Provosts occupied the civic chair. There have been four different Town Clerks during that time, and three successive Chief Constables, several holding their offices for a considerable time. Altogether for nearly half a century he has discharged important duties connected with the Burgh, which during all that time has secured him the confidence of all with whom he came in contact. It carries us back in our "Reminiscences of Auld Ayr" to find the last Municipal link now broken. Personally, Mr Brackenridge was much liked, though in no way did he give himself out to court popularity. He was most attentive to his duties and untiring in the faithful discharge of them, bringing to bear on them an intelligence combined with his experience which at all times commanded respect. Continuously since 1868 Mr Brackenridge engrossed the deeds in the register of sasines for the Burgh of Ayr and made searches, and was consequently very familiar with all transactions affecting heritable properties within the portion of the Burgh forming the Royalty. This lad practically formed his life's work, and it is worthy of mention that the engrossing of the writs in the register has been brought up to date by him on the day before he was laid aside. For many years Mr Brackenridge had acted as clerk in the police court, and he had also charge of the licenses under the Public Houses Acts. "Adam," as he was familiarly known to everybody having business about the Town's Buildings, had a good deal of Scottish independence in his nature and liked to get doing his work in his own way. He rarely put in an appearance at the office till after midday, but he made a practice of returning in the evenings and working often till an hour when most people were asleep. Once in the late Mr Pollock's time he took offence at something or other, stayed away for six months, and then reappearing at the office one day remarked to Mr Pollock, "You see I've come back." "Yes, I see you've come back," said Mr Pollock. Whereupon Adam without another word resumed his stool and his work.

A Builder of Last Century.

A correspondent sends me the following communication:—"Dear sir,—I shall be glad to learn through the columns of your paper, under the above heading, how many lawyers, architects, and master builders there were in Ayr fifty years ago. Thanking you in anticipation." Though it may seem strange to some, how this inquiry should be limited to "lawyers, architects, and master builders," I can easily follow the line of thought which has given rise to it. The increase in the value of property in Ayr has been greatly in excess in proportion to the increase of population. I am not going beyond the mark in saying that our Valuation Roll shows that the value of property in Ayr is now more than three times greater than it was fifty years ago. It has more than doubled within the past thirty years, and although there has been a steady increase in population, it has been nothing approaching to that. This increase of valuation suggests at least the chance of employment for more lawyers, architects, and builders, hence as a matter of curiosity comes the inquiry. I am sorry I cannot give a definite reply. Circumstances are much changed, and the term "lawyer" now is not used exactly in the same sense as it was half a century ago. It covered then what are now known as solicitors, writers, notary publics, agents, etc., and many who were members of the Faculty, as well as those who were not. In the "Reminiscences" (now being republished) I mention all I remember of these lawyers, but probably many are omitted. I am satisfied, however, that there were not half as many connected with the administration of the law as there are now. In the matter of architects I think then we had only three. I see now by the Post-Office Directory that we have fourteen, and to these may be added a few amateurs, showing that with the increase of building in Ayr, there has been no monopoly in architectural favours. Regarding builders, I cannot give exact information regarding the number fifty years ago. Circumstances regarding these have also changed. The building trades then were well defined—masons and joiners being quite distinct. I am only aware of one who combined the different trades as we have them now, and these I notice now number upwards of thirty. I do not think there were half that number fifty years ago, and these would be almost evenly divided between masons and joiners. I am reminded of the old master builder of the middle of last century by the appearance of a notice in our obituary columns last week

of the death of Mrs M'Fadzean, widow of the builder I refer to. Mr William M'Fadzean, I think, almost revolutionised the building trade, in Ayr in his day. Originally a joiner, he served his time under Mr M'Wheenie, in a joiner shop in Main Street, Newton, next to the Free Church. The whole staff connected with that work seldom exceeded six workmen, including apprentices. Trained in such a limited sphere, it was a matter of surprise to many the development which took place when Mr M'Fadzean commenced business for himself. It was a very small beginning to start with, but in a very few years he had an establishment of several hundred employees—masons, joiners, plumbers, slaters, and plasterers. I am not exaggerating when I mention that at one time he employed as many as all the other builders in Ayr combined. He had even a quarry of his own, and it was astonishing the work he got through. I do not supposed he ever had a scheduled job. He was never dilatory in making up an estimate. I have known him make up and give in an offer for a complete building of several hundred pounds in value in less than five minutes. He would make it up with a pencil in his hand, but with the end of it oftener in his mouth to assist him with his mental arithmetic than in making his calculations on paper. Some of his jobs no doubt paid him. The work was often HASHED through, but as the best do err sometimes, some of his contracts resulted in a heavy loss. Needless to say he had several ups and downs. His career was meteoric, and I have only to add he did not die a millionaire.

Hale-a-Century a Teacher.

I make no apology for adding to these reminiscences the following report of a Prestwick meeting held some time ago, referring to one already noticed in a previous chapter, and as supplementary to that chapter headed "My Schools and Schoolmasters." The report speaks for itself and I give it without comment:—

"On the occasion of his retiral after fifty years in the teaching profession, Mr Walter Beaton, late headmaster Prestwick Public School, was met in the schoolhouse, Prestwick, by former pupils and friends to the number of over one hundred ladies and gentlemen, and in the name

of a still larger number of subscribers was presented with a testimonial in the shape of a cheque for £153.

"Provost Allan, Ayr, in the course of his remarks, said he never occupied the chair of any function with more pleasure than he did that night. When he was a very small boy, Mr Beaton was a grown up man, and from his earliest days he appreciated and respected the personality of Mr Beaton. (Applause.) When Mr Beaton was principal assistant in Newton Academy he (the Provost) was one of his pupils. Mr Beaton's firmness, combined with his geniality, and the fatherly care with which he bestowed the knowledge many of them got in that class room, made a lasting impression on them and could never be effaced. (Applause.)

"Mr John M'Cosh, C. A. Glasgow, in making the presentation, said it was now many years since he was a pupil at Prestwick Public School. Still, the memories and associations of these early days were among the most vivid and most enduring that he had formed. Anyone who had been a pupil at Prestwick Public School, and who still resided in Prestwick, and who looked back on the intervening period, must be struck by the wonderful change and developments which had taken place in that interval. Not only were these earlier impressions which they had formed amongst the most enduring, but when linked with earlier scholastic training, they became some of the most vital and decisive factors in the formation of their character. To preside over the education of the young and rising generation was avocation than which there was none more noble and none more honourable. (Applause.) One wanted for the discharge of these duties special qualifications, and amongst these were insight, patience, firmness, and a certain ability of character, and above all he who exercised that office must be able to command and retain the respect of his pupils. He need scarcely say to those who had been attendants at Prestwick school, that Mr Beaton had displayed these qualities in the highest degree. (Applause.) No one was more highly respected by his pupils and by the members of the community in general, and no man deserved to be more so. (Applause.) Carlyle said somewhere—he thought in his essay on Burns—that in spite of our laws of supply and demand it was a strange fact that men were not prone to come forward and recognise real excellence. If Carlyle had in view pecuniary recognition he might have applied it not only to Ayrshire poets but to Ayrshire schoolmasters, because he thought it would be admitted that the remuneration that was meted out to that class was very inadequate, and it had been notoriously

so in that place. Therefore he would not be surprised if the educators of our youth in looking round at the pecuniary results gained much more easily in other channels, did not think that they had chosen the wrong profession. But he could assure Mr Beaton that all who were present there that night were in no doubt as to the value of the services which he had conferred upon them. (Applause.) They gratefully remembered the patient and vigilant care which he exercised over them in trying to kindle their youthful imaginations and to evoke their sensibilities by reading with such fine feeling such splendid masterpieces of English literature as Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," or "Gray's Elegy." No doubt the duties of schoolmaster in that place were sometimes very irksome. The boys of that time seemed to possess in a pre-eminent degree, an amount of irrepressible energy which was not easily directed into proper channels, and it required an unsparing application of the rod of correction to prevent a mischevious course. (Laughter.) It was not only in the domain of education that Mr Beaton was known. He had identified himself with the social movements of the place. He was a good bowler, a veteran golfer, an enthusiastic reporter, a brilliant and resourceful public speaker, and was known and was successful in almost every domain of their social and intellectual activity. (Applause.) His genial presence was welcomed wherever he went. Concluding, Mr M'Cosh said it was seldom a testimonial had been raised with such little effort and with so much spontaniety—(applause)—and, addressing Mr Beaton, he added:—It is my pleasant duty to present you in the name of the subscribers of this testimonial with this pocket-book, which contains a cheque for £153. It is not to be recognised or to be taken in a sense as a measure, but only as a fervent token of the high estimation in which you are held by us all, and we hope you may enjoy good health in your retirement, and that you may be long spared to be amongst us. (Loud applause.)

"Mr Beaton, replying, said:—It is not possible for me to find words in which adequately to express how much I feel for the appreciation of my humble services here, and for the kind words and wishes which accompany this testimonial from my old scholars and friends on the occasion of my retiring from this scene of nearly 40 years labour. (Applause.) A gratifying feature of this meeting is the fact that the chairman is Provost Allan, one of my old boys of Newton Academy, who with such such judicious tact, and business ability, conducts the affairs of the Burgh of Ayr—(applause)—and that Mr John M'Cosh, one of my

old Prestwick boys, has been the medium to convey to me this token of regard in terms so sympathetic, and so like his kindly disposition, that they will not readily be forgotten. (Applause.) I believe that no one, in whatever sphere he may have long laboured, can look back but with a very considerable amount of regret, on the opportunities he has missed of doing or saying something which might have altered the current of many a life—urging it to loftier aims and fuller knowledge with the resulting individual and public advantage. This thought comes to me with pressing importance after a teaching career of more than 50 years. Have the thousands of little wondering eyes into which I have looked found a something in mine to which they might appeal in their difficulties, and there received a ready and kindly response? Have I endeavoured to set before them the high ideal of being diligent, earnest, honest and truthful? (Applause.) How far short I may have come of this strenuous attempt the great day will declare; but the schoolmaster, I am thoroughly persuaded, has, more than any other public official, not excepting even the clergy, this tremendous responsibility resting upon him. (Applause.) Now, I must for a very little talk what is called "shop," about which an author whose book I read some time ago says that people are never really at their best except when they are talking what is commonly called "shop," for it is only then that they thoroughly forget themselves, and become lost in their subject. This may be all true, but I humbly submit that an acquaintance who persistently thrusts his "shop" into our conversation would become a bore, and receive the kind of treatment usually meted out to that type of humanity, and to avoid that fate I shall be as brief as possible. Coming to Prestwick in 1867 and taking up the duties in the old school at the Burgh Hall, I found that it had been closed for about a year, so that progress at first was not marked. I opened with a roll of 20, and not so very long ago there was on the roll of this school 420 scholars. (Applause.) What struck me as a very curious circumstance at the very outset of my work here was the mysterious disappearance of the older boys from school at certain times of the week. I was soon made aware of the cause. The boys were acting as caddies, an occupation which did much to retard the progress of our little school, and I thought it wise to become a member of the St Nicholas Golf Club, if by that means I might possibly find out a remedy for the distressing absenteeism. (Laughter.) In conference with Mr Charles Hunter, whom I am proud to call my life-long friend—(hear, hear)—a plan was hit upon by which no boy got clubs to carry unless

he attended school regularly. Under this arrangement the boys were allowed to await the arrival of the 2 train from Ayr, and, if not engaged, to come back to school. Here is H.M. Inspector's report on this subject—"The teacher complains of the irregular and fitful character of the attendance. The well-known golf-field adjacent to the school affords the older scholars a means of money getting, too tempting, it would seem, to be withstood, and the scholars frequently go thither when they ought to be at school. But the teacher has hit upon a plan which, as it aims at securing an attendance practically compulsory, promises to be a remedy. I shall be glad to hear of its success." But it was not. The sons of Zeruiah—the golfers—were too mighty for us. Mr Hunter and I are not vain enough to think that this attempt of ours at compulsory attendance had anything to do with the clauses in the Education Act that was passed shortly afterwards, but it may be allowed us to indulge the pleasing fancy that to Prestwick the country is indebted for one of the most valuable provisions relating to education. Irregularity from this cause continued for many years, and one of H.M. Inspectors in reporting on the school put the very pertinent question to the School Board, whether they could reasonably expect teachers to produce satisfactory results with an absenteeism of more than 30 per cent., and whether they were aware that compulsory clauses had a place in the Education Act? I rejoice to say that absence from school through attending the golf-links has been reduced to a minimum, and in recent years the attendance at the Public School compares most favourably with any district in the county. Long may the old school flourish in this and other respects, under the able supervision of Mr James Howat, who has the distinction of which few teachers can boast that he is headmaster of the school in which he sat as a little boy. The old parochial system under which some here may have been brought up, and which for hundreds of years had been of such immense benefit to Scotland, virtually came to an end in 1862, when the Revised Code of Mr Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke), better known afterwards as "Matchless Bob," was thrust upon the country, and under which for ten years Scottish education may be said to have made no progress. It had a demoralising influence on teachers and inspectors alike, and the mechanical securing of a high percentage of passes in the three R's came to be regarded as the standard of efficiency in schools. With the passing of Lord Young's Act in 1872 a new order of things obtained. A separate Scottish Education Department was established, with a code of fuller freedom and more extended aims, and

since that time numerous alterations have been introduced, all making for progress and encouragement to the brighter pupils, and of increased attention being given to the less clever of the scholars. We are just in the midst of further changes in our educational machinery, the abolition of the P.T. having been decreed, the institution of junior students that all that is involved in their training, and it is to be hoped that the results will be beneficial to the country. (Applause.) One important and special feature of present school life has been the formation of supplementary courses in public schools. These are gradually becoming more numerous and doing a most important work, as the subjects included in the course are of practical interest to the pupils who are at an age when they are especially ready to receive all the influences that bear on the formation of character, and much lasting benefit is anticipated from their increasing extension. Mr Haldane, speaking some time ago, said: 'More and more the conviction had grown upon him that what they had to look for in Scottish education in the days ahead, depended upon what they could look for in Scottish teachers.' Quite true. But how are men to be attracted to the teaching profession? Will it be by holding before them the prospect that when they are old and grey-headed grown in the service of the State, they shall be rewarded with a pension of whose very wretchedness it would be shame even to speak. I trow not. So much then for 'shop.' As a householder in Ayr I have endeavoured to act the part of a good citizen, and have not been diffident in expressing opinions regarding measures having for their object the furtherance of the prosperity of my native town. (Applause.) I esteem it a very high honour indeed to have been elected a member of several public boards and to be associated with others in their administration. Since the first day on which I entered Prestwick till now, I have experienced nothing but the greatest kindness from young and old, rich and poor, gentle and simple, and I should consider myself ingrate if its welfare and prosperity were not dear to me. My relations with them have been of the most pleasing character, and their many proofs of friendship are an abiding pleasure. It was on the recommendation of the late Dr Laurie that the Freemen appointed me to the office of master, and I can never forget their genial welcome, the wise counsel and the friendly intercourse which I have been privileged to enjoy. With Dr Laurie I had the closest intimacy, and the old Monkton manse has for me many cherished memories. The doctor was a gentleman of a noble and dignified presence, with a warm and kindly

manner which rendered him a great favourite among the poor of the parish. He was extremely fond of children, and knew personally every boy and girl in the parish. Many grown up people have a pleasing memory of his friendly pat on the head and kindly greeting as they sat either in the day school or Sunday school, and nothing delighted him more than to hear of the prosperity of those to whom he had given a helping hand in pushing themselves forward in the world. He was the author of two songs—"Hae ye mind o' lang, lang syne" and the "Auld Manse," which will live as long as Scotsmen take delight in the auld Scotch sangs. (Applause.) It is a touching picture, that of the old doctor a few years before his death, sitting, with snow white locks on his high-backed armchair in the old manse, and singing this favourite song. Shortly before this, a beloved member of his family had been removed by death, and as he sang the verse "beginning "Where are those bright hearts noo," the recollection of his loss seemed to press upon him with renewed force. His voice began to tremble and a silent tear stole down his cheek. He was my friend, faithful and just to me. (Applause.) I bring these somewhat disjointed remarks to a close by expressing my warmest thanks to you all in giving me your good wishes for the future, and accompanying these with such a handsome testimony to their sincerity. In leaving this scene of my long labours I thank Providence for smoothing my road amid many difficulties, for the warm friendships I have made, and for the cherished memory of many whose ashes now lie in the old St. Nicholas Churchyard. Shall the old maister be thought too presumptuous if he believes that he carries with him in his retirement, the assured respect and esteem of many of his old scholars who are taking a noble part in civic affairs not only here in Prestwick and Ayr but in other cities and towns, of many also both at home and abroad who are, whether as units in His Majesty's Navy and Army, as captains in the mercantile marine, as industrious honest merchants, as intelligent artizans or members of the learned profession are performing their duties with uprightness and fidelity. Time brings many changes and to me this budding springtime with my retiral from duty has a peculiar and significant meaning—

> Truly,
> Years following years steal something every day,
> At last they steal us from ourselves away.

So ending as I began, for all this recognition of my feeble services

I can no other answer make but thanks;
and thanks. (Applause.)

Provost Edmiston also spoke, and on the motion of Mr Beaton, Provost Allan was thanked for presiding.

REV. DR. LAWRIE OF MONKTON.

With reference to Mr Beaton's allusion to Dr. Lawrie it may be interesting to give a few additional notes.

The Rev. George James Lawrie was born in Loudon Manse on 10th October, 1797, and died at Hythe in 1888 in the 82nd year of his age. Belonging to a remarkable family of ministers, he being the sixth generation of clergymen in direct descent, he was ordained minister of Monkton and Prestwick at the Disruption as successor to the Rev. Dr. Burns, who was nephew of the national bard. His first assistant when years had impaired his fine physical ability was the present Dr. Pearson Macadam Muir, the justly esteemed minister of Glasgow Cathedral. His father was the Rev. Dr. Archibald Lawrie, a contemporary and friend of Robert Burns, and his grandfather was the Rev. Dr. George Lawrie, the patron of Burns, and whose kindness prevented him from emigrating to the West Indies. Both of these clergymen were successively ministers of Loudon Parish, and enjoyed the intimate friendship of the poet, who was a frequent visitor at the manse, and over its door there is inscribed a quotation from his writings referring to the Lawrie family. Mr Hamilton Nimmo, for many years a well-known citizen of Ayr, composed music for "Hae ye mind o' lang lang syne," which was often sung by Mrs Nimmo, the well-known Scottish vocalist, but the air "John Peel," to which the Doctor always sung his song, still is that by which it is best known.

In the course of the year succeeding his death there was a small brochure of the Doctor's "Songs and Miscellaneous Pieces" published in Ayr under the care of his friend, Mr Beaton, by Mr Hugh Henry, Printer, Newmarket Street. The pieces are few in number, but include a song which is a universal favourite and bids fair to be sung as long as the Doric endures. We reproduce it, and also the other song mentioned by Mr Beaton. It should be borne in mind that the local allusions are to places in the parish of Loudoun:—

Lang Lang Syne.

Tune—"John Peel."

Hae ye mind o' lang, lang syne,
When the summer days were fine,
And the sun shone brighter far
Than he's ever dune syn syne?
Do you mind the Hag Brig turn,
Whar we guddled in the burn,
And were late for the schule in the mornin'?

Do you mind the sunny braes,
Whar we gathered hips and slaes,
And fell amang the bramble busses,
Tearin' a' our claes;
And for fear they would be seen,
We gaed slippin' hame at e'en,
But were licket for our pains in the mornin'?

Do ye mind the Miller's dam,
When the frosty Winter cam',
How we slade upon the curler's rink,
And made their game a sham;
When they chased us thro' the snaw,
We took leg-bail ane and a',
But we did it o'er again in the mornin'?

What famous fun was there,
Wi' our games at houn' and hare,
When we played the truant frae the schule,
Because it was the fair;
And we ran frae Patie's Mill,
Through the woods on Winny Hill,
And were feart for the tawse in the mornin'.

Where are these bright hearts noo,
That were then so leal and true?—
Oh! some hae left life's troubled scene,
Some still are struggling thro',
And some hae risen high
In life's changeful destiny,
For they rose wi' the lark in the mornin'.

Now life's sweet Spring is past,
And our Autumn's come at last,
Our Simmer day has passed away,
Life's Winter's comin' fast;
But tho' lang its night may seem,
We shall sleep without a dream
Till we wauken on yon bright Sabbath mornin'.

The Auld Manse.

Tune—"The Auld Hoose."

The auld Manse! the auld Manse!
A dear hame ance to me;
Fond mem'ry clings to auld langsyne,
When youth was fu' o' glee.
A father's words are written there,
A mother's counsels true;
And the music of a sister's voice
Rests on sad mem'ry noo.

The auld Kirk! the auld Kirk!
Nae Sabbath bells ring there;
The ivy hangs where hallowed thoughts
Ance raise in praise and prayer;
And round its roofless wa's noo rest
The tenant and the laird,
And we read auld names on auld grave-stanes
Grown gray in the auld kirkyaird.

The auld ha' hoose amang the wud,
Whar the laird and the leddy leeve,
Wi' open haun and kinly word,
Aye ready to relieve;
And there's kind young hearts in the auld ha' hoose,
And they're come o' gentle blude;
The puir man's love and the widow's prayer
Cheer their hearts when doing good.

The auld gaberlunzie man,
Wha gaed frae toon to toon,
Sat doon and grat his fill to see
The dear auld Manse dang doon;
For mony an awmous he gat there,
Frae me amang the lave,
But he's sleepin' noo, whar rank's forgot,
Beside the auld laird's grave.

A blessing rests upon the Manse,
Tho' clouds on some may fa',
But Manse bairns never maun forget
Thae clouds to clear awa',
And teach the lonely widow's heart,
Wi' sorrow sair cast doon,
'Midst cloudy troubles here to trust
The promise frae aboon.

AN ADDED CHAPTER OF AULD AYR REMINISCENCES.

(From "Observer" Nov., 1905.)

While Ayr has extended in every direction, and has had its suburbs quite transformed, quite as great a change may be observed in its principal street. A visitor returning to Ayr after a long absence would not know the High Street. A few of the old houses still remain—some of them it would be a pity to demolish. The "Tam o' Shanter" and

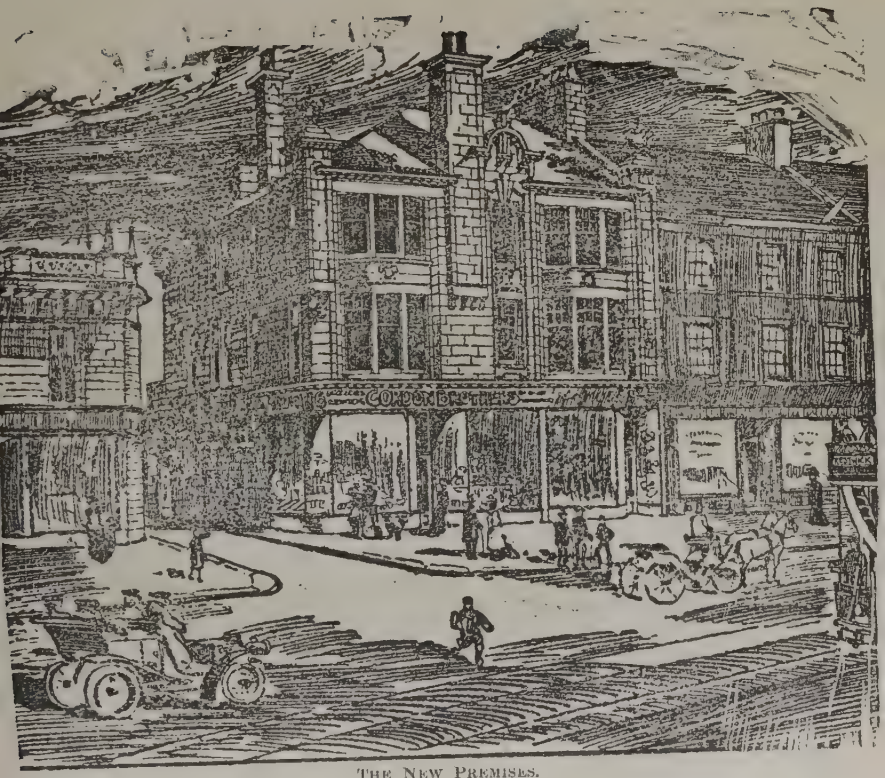
THE TAM O' SHANTER INN.

the "Whip Inn" are relics of the past which may remain just to remind us of Auld Ayr. All others may go—and are rapidly going—giving us a High Street which will compare favourably with the principal streets of any modern town. The enterprise of numerous citizens has enabled this to be done with great success; and the widening of High Street some years ago removed the narrowest part of

it, and made it from end to end suitable for a double line of tramways, without endangering the ordinary traffic. A few more removals of old property, and the erection of buildings in their place—such as we have had recently put up to beautify the old street—will make the principal street in Ayr well worthy of the county town and its attractive surroundings. The most recent erection in High Street is that at the Kirk Port, which has involved the removal of the premises lately belonging to the Messrs Rutherford, of which we give an illustration. The history of this building and its surroundings deserves notice in my "Reminiscences of Auld Ayr." The old building now taken down was about as respectable in appearance fifty years ago as any of its neighbours. Between it and the Wallace Tower there was a continuation of two-storied buildings—many of them centuries old—and almost all of them have now been removed. The new Union Bank removed from "over the way" was among the first to clear away a row which was ultimately entirely removed by the Burgh Improvement Scheme. On the opposite side of the entrance to the Kirk Port, a building of similar size stood, in which there were three shops, occupied by Mr Templeton (our Old Bridge benefactor); Deacon Ingram, another watchmaker; and Mr Kay, a draper. At that time the Winton Buildings, nearly opposite, were occupied by Messrs Arthur, Currie, & Co., who, with Messrs Lawrie & Smith, in Sandgate, divided between them the fashionable high-class clothing and dressmaking business in Ayr. The Clydesdale Bank, however, purchased the Winton Buildings, and Messrs Arthur, Currie & Co., erected the Ailsa Buildings opposite, the firm becoming then Currie, Rae & Co., has flourished now for upwards of forty years, and is still continued by Mr M'Vicar. The new building now erected on the opposite side of the Kirk Port from the Ailsa Buildings will form an excellent corner, and materially enhance the appearance of the whole neighbourhood. It will likely, in future, be known as the Gordon Buildings, having been erected by Messrs Gordon Brothers, who are removing their business from Newmarket Street. The site has been long occupied as a large wine, spirit, grocery, and provision warehouse. As far back as 1828 it was occupied by Bailie Forrest, and was continued by him for about half a century, and conducted by him with the greatest success. The other merchants in town at that time of great note were Wm. Wood, Wm. Stewart, Maitland Brown, Peter Ferguson, and Robertson & Baxter, and I think Mr Forrest's was perhaps the most prosperous business of the whole. I have still in my mind's eye the

figure of old Bailie Forrest. He was one of the most courteous of gentlemen, a general favourite, always dressed in a swallow-tailed coat, top hat, and in summer a white vest, and no man was more obliging even to the poorest of his customers. I am not certain how the change took place in the bailie's business. The property was purchased by the Messrs Rutherford, and Bailie Forrest having taken one of the Rutherford's into partnership, the business for a time was conducted at Forrest & Rutherford. Eventually the lease of the premises expired, and the whole business fell into the hands of the landlord of the premises, and forthwith was carried on by Messrs Rutherford, by whom it was continued for many years till disposed of to Mr Thomson, who lately removed to the premises long occupied by Mr James Oliver. Old Bailie Forrest had to leave his long occupied premises and go further down the street near the Old Bridgend, carrying with him the goodwill as far as his name was concerned. At last term the old premises, much deterioated since 1828, were sold to Messrs Gordon, who have erected on the site the handsome block of buildings of which I herewith give an illustration which may be compared with the old block of buildings which has now been removed. It is now only my intention to follow up the successions which have followed in the trade. All the old business concerns I have mentioned have been continued in many cases in the same premises. Changes have been made in the buildings as well as in the personnel of those who conducted them, but these old establishments are still doing a great business amidst considerably increased rivalry. The oldest of them all—Forrest & Co., continues to be conducted by Mr Brown, now sole partner, and a grand-nephew of the old bailie. The new premises erected by Messrs Gordon Brothers will, I trust, carry with them that prosperity which attended the old establishment. Increased accommodation, modern equipment, up-to-date facilties, and the energy and enterprise of youth, augur well for a continuance of that prosperity which existed in this site in my younger days. History repeats itself, and there is every reason to expect that the old Bailies premises will be as successful in their handsome new form as they were in the old. It scarcely falls within the scope of the present article to describe the new premises. It is sufficient to say they are constructed in a manner which was not dreamed of 50 years ago. They are erected on one of the most central and prominent sites in the town. There is a wide open area in front of the buildings and the tramway passes the door and has a stopping place there. The ground floor of the shop is

THE OLD PREMISES.



THE NEW PREMISES.

1400 square feet in area, forming a spacious hall, round which are ranged the counters of the various departments. The elaborate and expensive fittings must be seen, any description would fall short. The basement floor—1000 square feet—is well ventilated and lighted, and everything here is of the latest type. A more complete establishment can scarcely be conceived. My imagination rather wanders in the direction of wondering what the merchants of fifty or sixty years ago—the honest men of Auld Ayr—would think if they could return and see the transformation.

CONCLUSION.

Perhaps it is high time these reminiscences were brought to a conclusion. As mentioned in the preface the attempt has been made to give a picture of Ayr fifty years ago, and an account of the "honest men" as they were then. Much has had to be suppressed out of consideration for many still alive, and the writer himself, I hope, has not obtruded himself too much on his readers. Perhaps for this he may obtain some credit for a becoming modesty. He knows well the woe which is awarded to those of whom all men speak well. This is a woe he is sure to escape, for he has his full share of those who do not speak well of him. On this occasion he leaves himself in the hands of his adversaries since he has many, if it be the case that their prayers were "Oh that mine enemy would write a book." He has done it, but it was at the request of his friends, and he has thus, not for the first time, gratified both sides. If he has not obtruded himself too much in his reminiscences, he now ventures in conclusion to lay aside the modesty alluded to, by adding a little to the story of the past fifty years of life in Ayr, and extracting from another paper which has spoken well of him and which is as complimentary a notice of the writer as he could possibly desire. It forms the 1754th number of a series of notices which have appeared in the Glasgow "Bailie" of people, no doubt good, bad, and indifferent, which are entitled

MEN YOU KNOW.

EX-PROVOST FERGUSON, AYR.

"There is an intimate connection between Glasgow and Ayrshire. Many of our prominent citizens hail from the western county; and have we not an invasion by the South-

Western Railway every Wednesday, notably from the county town? In return, crowds of Glaswegians spend a month or two every summer near some of the Ayrshire links—Gailes, Troon, Prestwick, or Girvan, and now Turnberry has been added to the list. The "Bailie" makes no apology, therefore, for adding another Ayr notable to his "Men You Know," in the person of James M. Ferguson, an ex-Provost of the town of honest men and bonnie lasses. Mr Ferguson is one of the best-known men in Ayrshire, and is no stranger in Glasgow, especially on the Wednesdays, when he is frequently to be seen in commercial circles, carrying well, big and burly, his three score years and ten. He looks, and, as he says, feels twenty or thirty years younger than the usual septuagenarian. The Man You Know is a native of Newton-on-Ayr, a district of the county town to which he has adhered all his life. He represented it at the Council Board for nearly a quarter of a century. For ten years of this quarter of a century he was a Magistrate, and during three of the ten he occupied the Provost's chair, and did so with much advantage to the community. Though a staunch Conservative and Churchman, it says much for the moderate character of our friend that his ward, during the twenty-five years he was a member of the Town Council, was the most Liberal in the burgh. He is also a Justice of the Peace for the County of Ayr, receiving the appointment many years ago, so the story goes, from his political opponents. Nearly forty years ago Mr Ferguson acquired the "Ayr Observer," the old-established organ of the Conservative party in the county, and he has conducted it ever since, with a fairness in giving access to his columns to those holding opposing opinions, which has gained him the respect of all parties in politics. As a proof of his business energy, it may be mentioned that a few years after he acquired the "Observer" he purchased the "Ayrshire Express," and afterwards the "Ayrshire Weekly News," and merged them into the "Observer," making it a bi-weekly paper. During his term of office as Provost numerous improvements were effected in the municipal economy of the burgh. It was, moreover, while he was Chairman of the Harbour Trust that the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company was first approached to guarantee the interest of the Harbour debt, which debt amounted to some half-a-million sterling. This arrangement effected a saving of nearly £4000 a year to the Harbour Trustees, and consequently placed the harbour in a sound position, and this, too, without placing any extra financial burden on the railway. Indeed the ex-Provost is

a stout friend of the railway company. His predecessors in office were always in opposition to it, demanding favours and giving nothing they could help in return. Mr Ferguson believes in one good turn deserving another, and such was his tact that it is said the Glasgow and South-Western Company bestowed more favours on Ayr during his three years of Provostship than during thirty years of those who preceded him in office. For the first twelve years of its existence, the ex-Provost was a member of the Ayr School Board. At the two earliest elections he stood second on the poll, and in the next two he was at the top—a fair indication of his popularity. He was also Chairman of Newton Parochial Board for seventeen years prior to the formation of Parish Councils. His life-long connection with the parish naturally connected him with Newton Parish Church, of world-wide fame as the church the pulpit of which was filled in succession by Caird, Stewart, Burns, Wallace, and M'Leod, each of whom, after a few years in Newton, became famous elsewhere. The Man You Know has been upwards of forty years a member of Newton Kirk Session, and for upwards of twenty years Session Clerk. He was appointed, many years ago, by the Presbytery, one of the Ayr representative elders to the General Assembly. For three years in succession he had the same honour conferred on him by the Town Council, and this year he has been appointed by the Presbytery again. Among the improvements of Ayr with which Mr Ferguson is more immediately connected are the formation of Falkland Park in Newton, Hawkhill in Wallacetown, and the old Cattle Market buildings in Ayr itself. Indeed he has been associated with every progressive scheme in Ayr for the past forty years. Mr Ferguson, moreover, is to-day advocating and assisting in further schemes having a like object in view. Some say he is too daring; seemingly, at least, his schemes are too daring for an over-cautious Council. It is to be acknowledged, however, that the success which has attended the schemes he has already assisted, fully justifies the efforts he suggests to carry them further. All those, the Bailie may say in conclusion, who cannot agree with Mr Ferguson, can agree to differ with him without any loss of friendship. Could better testimony than this be provided to his hearty and thoroughly genuine nature?

Mr Robert Templeton.

At the time when the efforts of Lord Rosebery, Mr Oswald, and others, have been successful in raising £10,000 to preserve the Auld Brig of Ayr, we have much pleasure in giving the above likeness of a wealthy citizen of Ayr of half a century ago who bequeathed £10,000 to rebuild it, after his three surviving sisters had enjoyed their lifetime of the interest of it. It remains yet to be seen what will become of Mr Templeton's legacy.

BURNS' PROPHECY FULFILLED.

"I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn."

Photograph of the old New Bridge being taken down, 1878. On the opposite page we have the Twa Brigs of Burns time.

THE TWA BRIGS.

ADDENDA.

As an accompaniment to my "Reminiscences," if not as a contrast to them, I herewith add a chapter also taken from the "Observer" during the present year (1907). Readers will compare the strictures to be found in these "Anticipations" with that which appears in several of the chapters containing the strictures of 50 years ago. There was certainly much ill-nature then, and the absence of this is certainly an improvement. "Reminiscences" and "Anticipations," however, must speak for themselves.

Anticipations.

(Translated from a Chaldea Manuscript.)

CHAPTER I.

A Dream.

So I awoke!

It came to pass that before retiring to rest on my virtuous couch, while the shades of evening were falling fast, my reminiscences of 50 years ago were before me, and I rejoiced therein greatly.

There was much to make me happy in the visible progress which the revolving wheels of time had brought round, and the improvements which had been made in all around during these past years.

Pondering on these I fell asleep, and in a vision I saw all things new, and changes which had happened within the preceding years were as nothing compared with these now before me.

The future was before me, and things had come to pass most marvellous in mine eyes, and which were not in the mind of man to conceive.

I saw these things and marvelled greatly.

In my pride of heart I had thought that the period of time which closed the nineteenth century had been a half

century of unexpected prosperity such as had never been seen on the face of earth before that day.

But I was only wise in mine own conceit, for in this world of change a new heaven and a new earth were before me in the vision I saw, but which seemed unto me no vision, but a stern reality.

A glorified Ayr had arisen: fair as the sun, and the inhabitants thereof were like an army with banners.

I searched in vain for unhealthy closes and hovels no better than dens and caves in the earth. A new Jerusalem had sprung up, and in the middle of the twentieth century men could take knowledge that Ayr was no longer a town, but a city on the shore, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth.

The streets therof were laid with Walkerite like unto jasper, but dark as night, and shining as the sun in its strength.

The crooked streets had all been made straight, with neither curves nor elbows, and all ran north and south and east and west.

And there were open spaces in the city where the sons of men with their wives, their sons, and their daughters could enjoy themselves.

And the city was bound on the north by the river Pow, on the east by the lands of Castlehill, on the south by the river Doon, and on the west by the great firth that floweth from Greenock to the Craig of Ailsa.

The length of the city was five thousand cubits, and the breadth thereof two thousand, and there was no poverty there.

Unto everyone was given all that he or she required, and they had all things in common. Education unto them was free, and food was furnished for nothing. The body and the mind were alike nourished, and the word want was all unknown.

Landlords were abolished.

Neither was there need for bankers.

Lawyers also ceased from troubling; and doctors also were removed from the earth, and people kept well.

Clergymen only were suffered to remain, these being most difficult to remove.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes: Lived where they liked, slept where the liked, eat where they liked, and drank what and where they liked. All were happy.

Every restaurant was free to all, and hotels were held in common, and the name of Forbes Mackenzie was unknown.

The days of Bailie Niven were gone for ever, for there were now no judges in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

And in my dream I said, How can this thing be.

How is it that aforetime we had Provosts and Bailies and Councillors and Officials with large salaries, and Lamplighters with small salaries, and Inspectors getting £2 10s each week for superintending two boys, each receiving a tenth of that sum?

And I marvelled greatly!

Aforetime we had a Provost and Bailies who were called rulers.

There were Officials under them who, however, ruled over them, and received salaries for doing so, while those who were supposed to be over them had no salaries whatever, except what they could create for themselves on deputations, or in other ways converting the Common Good into a Common Bad.

Oh! where! tell me where! are our former rulers gone?

I was speechless. My tongue did cleave unto the roof of my mouth.

I was like unto one known in olden times as Rip Van Winkle, who, having fallen asleep, awoke to find a marvellous change. And I said unto myself again, How can these things be?

I will arise and go unto the office of the "Observer," the greatest paper known to the sons of men; peradventure as of old it will afford unto me information on every subject.

It was a glorified newspaper office I came into. The walls were of crystal resting on fine gold. There were alabaster doors, decorated with precious stones. The counters and desks were of fine ivory, very like a whale, or the teeth of a whale, and the floors were of marble and every thing was grand, as all pertaining to the "Observer" ever was and ever shall be.

And the click of the Linotype was heard in the entrance hall, but it was only to discourse sweet music, playing any tune at a wave of the operator's hand while setting the line of type, and at the same time correcting all mis-spelt words, all lapses of grammar, and turning out all sentences no matter how slipshod the manuscript into first-rate English.

Now the Linotype was the greatest of all the machines on the earth. It could set everything except Valuation Rolls, for to do this it required in former days the sanction of the Valuation Roll Committee. It was now sufficient unto the purpose of producing music costing nothing, and

so was known over all lands as the gratis music provider, and held in high repute at the opening of the passing years. Peradventure in these latter days it was not so highly esteemed as in the olden time. Free concerts not being so much thought of now when everything else is free as well.

It was pleasant to the ear the sound of the Linotype music, and I beheld with amazement the wondrous work which it performed.

Unlike former days when the "Observer" was issued only twice a week, it was now sent out four times a day to admiring multitudes, who greatly rejoiced therein.

It had swallowed up all competitors, and now stood alone in the city as a bright and shining light, beloved by Jews and Samaritans alike.

And I beheld the glory of the office, and its adornments, and the multitudes of its messengers and the splendour of its equipment.

And I said unto one of the Scribes, who are these that wait as messengers to go forth with the papers as they are issued, to deliver them to and fro over the city?

And he answered and said, these be they who have fallen from their high and lofty estate.

Their occupation is now gone.

They were at one time Provosts and Bailies and Councillors, but now their offices are abolished, and they have been taken in as hirelings and emissaries of the press.

In former days they held the press in disrepute, and complained bitterly that they were not reported fully, nor had due honour paid unto them.

They even wept, because they were not sufficiently noticed and made much of.

In their pride of heart they thought it better to be kicked than remain unnoticed.

Even when they were noticed their wrath was raised, and no man knew how to please them.

They have now fallen from their high estate, and their office has been given to another, and none so poor as do them reverence.

In the olden time they ruled the city, or at least thought they did.

They had riches and honours in abundance, but those who were officials conspired against them and overturned them, and demanded a ruler whom they could respect.

And the people took part with the officials and said, nay, but give us a manager to rule over us.

The city was now ruled by a manager, unto whom all power was given to set up or to cast down, to say unto the

Town Clerk write this and he wrote it, and unto the Surveyor do this and he did it.

Power was given unto him to make the Medical Officer content with his salary, and to control all other officials, including lamplighters, scavengers, Chief Constables, and those who were only chief constables in their own eyes; hospital nurses, and those who danced with them, and those who conducted the Tramways and the Electric Works, and took charge of the lavatories, and all the lovely places belonging to the city.

And so this new ruler was appointed.

And men thought that by abolishing municipal rulers and only having one to rule over them, taxes would be abolished, but it was not so.

Men had not yet learned what it was to be chastised with scorpions, who had only been accustomed to the chastisement of whips.

The wheels of fate grind slowly, it would take a time to find out the whole good and evil which would arise from the appointment of a manager.

Unto this manager all men gave heed, he controlled everything, and did all things well, at all events they were no worse than when there were eighteen managers who had to be managed.

On the motion of one Jaybee Eff, a man great in stature and mighty in valour, and who was accounted a Prince in Israel, this great change was accomplished and the records of the Council of the town which no other town surpassed were closed, and a new era opened.

CHAPTER II.

The City.

Truly the city was beautiful for situation.

A river ran through its midst, clear as crystal, and on it glided gondolas and yachts, yea, and fishermen's boats also.

While to the mouth thereof the ships of Tarshieh came with Cedars of Lebanon, and merchandise from the east and the west, yea, and from Arran also.

Coal was also exported to the land of Ireland, and merchants made much gain thereby.

The city also was enriched, but did not acknowledge how much it was indebted to the Harbour.

Moreover, the steamers came in their season, and added much to the enjoyment and comfort of the inhabitants.

People loved the "Juno" and its machinery, and that which was adjacent thereto.

Now in former times when the municipal rulers held sway, and levied taxes on the Harbour and swallowed all they could get, the Harbour was held in bondage and the river was kept unclean.

But now when a manager was set up to rule over all, the Harbour rejoiced and prospered, and the traders flourished like unto a green bay tree.

The steamers also increased in number, and sailed to all places, even beyond the sea and the coasts of Ireland. Moreover, they went to the Isle of Man; and the inhabitants of these places also came daily to the great city and expended much money therein.

The river of the city also was cleansed and the waters walled back, and small ships sailed thereon; and on either side was there paths of pleasantness and peace whereon walked the old and young of both sexes.

And many marvelled greatly that so long a time had been taken to purify the river and erect terraces thereon, making it all a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

Aforetime it was not so, for the river was a disgrace and a receptacle of refuse and filth, and unsavoury dens were on either side of the banks, loathsome to behold and unprofitable to possess; but now the river made glad all who came to it.

But the manager did not confine himself to the beautifying of the river, nor the improving of the streets of the city, nor in building lavatories, nor in overturning all that former rulers had trifled with.

He did all things well.

The beautiful shore also, which, lying by the sea, extended from the river to the Castle of Greenan, was utterly changed at his command and became highly attractive.

The Low Green ceased being a wilderness, but was made glad by having attractions brought to it, all of which were made more than self-supporting.

A temple like to that of Solomon's was erected there, and had become the wonder of the whole earth.

And men marvelled greatly at the change which had taken place.

In my vision I wondered also, and said, How can these things be?

And I made inquiry!

I remembered the days of old, the days of small things, and could not see how such marvels should have arisen to make glad the city which had now become so great—possibly the greatest on the face of the whole earth.

The thing was soon made plain to me.

In former days, to cry for such alterations was as the voice crying in the wilderness.

Few gave heed to exhortation or to suggestions as to having things as they should be.

These were the days of very small things indeed, though some thought otherwise.

There arose a cry in the land for a band!

And the rulers all with one accord said, Yea! ye shall have a band.

Everyone thought they knew all about bands, and every man was wiser than his neighbour.

And one said unto another, Let us have a military band.

But others said, not so; we don't want a military band.

They did not know what a military band meant.

And one said, Go to! let us have a band of instruments made of wood, a sackbut, a psaltery, a harp, a trombone, a fife, and a penny whistle.

But others said, Nay, but we must have a brass band and drums, large and small.

Nevertheless, the expense of this terrified many.

Many wanted a little of both, and though the cost thereof should be sixpence, the inhabitants of the country, false to their traditions, were quite prepared to say, "bang goes sixpence."

There was a tumult in the Council over the question of the band.

Aforetime they had a band which pleased many.

Notwithstanding this, there was always a cry for money. More money! And it became a weariness to the flesh always to hear this doleful cry.

Finally it was resolved that more money would be given, but for that more would be required.

Then the music began, and it was not the sound of harmony.

The former members were afraid their occupation would be gone and their places taken and given to others, and a band of hirelings would take their place.

And there were many who would willingly have said, Cut them down! why cumber they the ground? and would have welcomed the hirelings, though only for part of a year.

Again it was said, Let them alone this year also, until they are pruned and the chaff separated from the wheat, the useless removed and the best kept, and let us have a resident band, abiding with us all the year.

But the rulers were all at sixes and sevens and they would listen to no one, each retaining his own thoughts and each determined to have his own way.

But a Daniel arose, and said, Men and brethren, why is it that ye all wish for the same thing but imagine that it is something different which each wants?

Ye wish for ye know not what!

It seemeth a legal thing to you to say, Give us a band! not knowing what manner of band it is to be.

Neither when the band is given unto you do you know what to do with it.

Like all other things that be, a band requires an habitation wherein it might perform.

It must dwell somewhere!

If it is to be in the open air, then it must be a military band.

But if it is to be one to discourse sweet music under cover such as will be delightful to all who love sweet sounds, and to induce many to fly from temptation and to take unto themselves enjoyment rational and free from vice, then you must have a hall wherein such meetings can be held.

Go to! First build ye a hall wherein such music can be given, then a blessing will rest on your efforts and there will be peace and plenty in the land.

And it was so, for all with one accord gave heed to the wise judgment.

And a temple was raised in which the mind could be raised, the tastes of the community elevated, and their bodies cleansed.

This was not required by all.

For some there were who washed once a year whether they required it or not.

These were modest in their thoughts and requirements.

But there were others who wished it otherwise, and who loved sweet sounds, and delighted in comfort, independent of the elements, and who delighted to see the city made attractive, and who wished baths taken of water from the mighty deep and warmed and who were willing to pay for the same, not wishing others to make sacrifices for things which if worth having were worth paying for.

Let the charges be small, they said, for it is the multitude of small sums which brings ample remuneration in its train.

Now the Temple was built, grand and massive, fit to stand the storm but not expensive and certainly not ill-favoured.

And bands were formed of the old material, and with some hirelings added.

And there was a senior and a junior band, which could discourse music at all times.

The senior was known as the Burgh Band, and the junior was the Industrial.

Each band played well, and it is said by the Prophets, "music charms the savage breast."

And the inhabitants were pleased, for the members of the band yearly increased in numbers and were taken by contingents unto all places and an increased taste for music was manifested in the community.

And the revenue derived from the Temple and its resources was ample to pay all expenses and to leave over large surpluses.

For there came from long distances crowds to see the beauties of the city and its surroundings, and these often took refuge in the Temple and paid well for the same.

And all rejoiced over the attractions now offered in the city.

Verily the day of small things had passed away when the rulers in their wisdom thought it better to give here a little and there a little and never anything to the full.

Much money was thereby foolishly thrown away, yielding but a poor return.

But when it was resolved that if a thing was worth doing it was worth doing well the wisdom of that course was soon made manifest.

And the croakers who always predicted evil over the expenditure of each sixpence unless it was for their own gratification were altogether silenced.

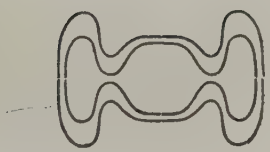
There came from the uttermost ends of the earth delighted crowds to view the city and the surroundings thereof.

To rest and amuse themselves in the temple, and to rejoice in the sweet sound of the music discoursed there.

They brought wealth to the city, and now there was no poverty there nor dull times.

There were now no men idle there, neither were there any unlet houses, and people ceased to go to foreign lands to obtain a living.

The rest of the acts connected with the city are to be found in another chapter.



CHAPTER III.

Attractions.

It would take numerous chapters to enumerate the changes in and improvements of the city which I saw in my vision.

Everything was made attractive, not only for the pleasure of visitors, but for all who dwelt within the precincts of the city.

The Racecourse, as well as the Low Green, was changed from being a wilderness, on which horses ran three days in the year; and a few people who found time hanging heavy on their hands employed that leisure by putting small balls into holes, an operation which it is said required great skill and ingenuity.

The course now had also undergone a great transformation.

No longer now somewhat of a wilderness, it was a thing of beauty, and highly attractive. The race stand was transformed now into a grand Educational Institute, bringing pupils from far and near to derive the benefit of a high-class education.

The princes of the land sent their children here.

In another corner was a palatial Hydropathic, also attracting thousands to benefit from its baths, and enjoy the delightful scenery of the land of Burns, and the ozone of the sea thereof.

The ground around these buildings was open to all.

Pupils, visitors and townspeople all enjoyed the open space, and found much delight therein.

Moreover, the lands around were laid out with squares, terraces and mansions, all occupied by the wealthy of the country.

Ayr was certainly no mean city.

I thought of the days of old when men were afraid of their shadows, and looked upon a penny on the rates as the approach of the day of judgment, and when casting bread upon the waters was unknown.

Now when bread had been cast upon the waters, it had returned to them more than a hundredfold.

No attraction had been given that had not yielded a return more than ample to recompense them for all outlay over and over again.

The short-sighted generation which had frittered away the resources of the burgh, and kept it behind other towns, had gone the way of all flesh; and a new people had arisen,

who would not walk in the old ways, but resolved to have all things new.

A few memorials of the past had been retained to remind us of the days of old.

The Auld Brig was retained as one of the memorials, and was a source of joy to many.

It had been immortalised by the prophet of the country, who had highly extolled it as a remnant of former ages, while a new modern erection had gone the way of destruction, not being able to stand the devastation of time.

Another relic of a by-gone age was an inn sacred to the memory of Tam o' Shanter, which still remained in the street which was called High.

Another relic of an ecclesiastical age which was also preserved was the Newton Kirk, covered with clinging ivy, serving to remind us of an age when barns were considered good enough erections in which to worship.

History repeats itself.

All the other churches of the anti-twentieth century age were swept away as being unworthy of the sacred use for which they were erected.

In there place now there were great buildings, such as graced the country a thousand years ago.

Abbeys and cathedrals well worthy of the purpose for which they were used had been erected, and no more were there little churches for little bodies, each worshipping a different God.

The olden time had passed away when each kirk had a God of its own, when there were big Popes and little Popes, big Frees and little Frees, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Romanists, Turks, Jews, and Atheists.

All these things had passed away.

No one said now, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, but all formed one grand church and held the same faith.

When peace was preached it was peace, and when we were told of goodwill towards men it meant goodwill and nothing else.

Small minds and great quarrels had alike taken flight.

Love, peace, joy, goodwill, and charity alone remained.

The lion lay down with the lamb, the Salvationist and the Catholic did likewise, and the Frees were all of one mind. At this men marvelled greatly.

All creeds were amalgamated and the members of each become as brethren.

Clericals had become as amiable as laymen. Even musical people ceased to trouble. Brassbanders and pierrots embraced each other, and busybodies were at rest.

It was no weariness of the flesh attending church now.

The eye and the ear were alike gratified.

Even the sermon was attractive.

There were no sleepers now.

When the sermon was done it was done, and not continued till the allotted time was up.

It was a new heaven and a new earth, a new church and a new state, a new town and a new country, a new Ayr, and auld Ayr was only remembered as a thing of the past.

No longer did tramway cars run on our streets, and motors terrify old and young as they rushed about, as if those in them were afraid to be recognised in their goggles and their apparel, which was hideous to behold.

Time continued to be valuable and could be paced, but something was required more swift than the motor, and yet those who travelled could remain elegant in their outward adornments.

Men now could rise on eagle's wings and cleave the air with safety.

Air ships were in great demand, and people could fly to the uttermost parts of the earth with ease, nothing to make them afraid.

Even submarines also were numerous, and parties regardless of the perils of the deep, instead of sailing over the waters could dive under them and come up at any desired haven.

All in the earth was subject to man, and so was all under the earth, and the sea as well.

Truly, the lines of those I saw in my vision were cast in pleasant places.

But I awoke, and lo! it was all a dream.

And I thought in mine heart surely some of it had come to pass.

For how could I go back to the old world which I had rejoiced in my heart had been left behind, but which seemingly had remained.

I took up the "Observer" and found the date not 1970 but 1907, and therein I found the report of a Council meeting.

Peradventure I said in mine heart, the band question will now be settled!

Alas! the wicked Councillors were still devoting all the minds they had got to the question of a paltry payment.

The pierrots also were still under consideration.

No temple or hall was ever yet provided for shelter or amusement.

No baths were yet contemplated.

Even Donaldson's property remained.

Final notices for rates were being delivered from door to door.

One of the streets even was being repaired as in the olden times, with rough stones, thin mud being scattered thereon, to be returned when dry as dust to the wayfarer, who suffered much thereby.

The full value of Walkerite had not yet been acknowledged.

The Auld Brig remained, but with no Templeton Brig beside it.

The insanitary erections along the river banks also remained, and no esplanade had been formed.

All remained as a memorial of the past, and with no seeming regard to the future.

The time of the Council was taken up with devising schemes to grant holidays to their employees.

To one was given a month, to another three weeks, while to others only a fortnight for a holiday was allowed.

It was thought well to allow these without deduction The question remained, would individual Councillors be as liberal with their own employees.

Holidays, however, are often to be commended. Could not the whole Town Council themselves have a full holiday for a year?

Who would suffer?

They might have had more than a year for all they had done of late.

Oh! for a Council which would do something towards fulfilling my vision.

It is said that life is like unto a vision, but it was no delight to me to find that my vision had not been true to the life.

May better times come quickly.

*** The allusion to the "Newton Kirk" in the foregoing reminds me of a story which I have omitted in my ministerial reminiscences in connection with Dr A. K. H. Boyd while minister of Newton. Externally there is no difference in the old Kirk to what it was then. It remains as barn-like as ever. The inside, however, has been renovated since. In Dr Boyd's time the old-fashioned pews existed, as well as the old pulpit which had served Dr Peebles for fifty years. The only attempt at decoration was in the painting of the front of the gallery, which had been grained a fine imitation oak, far richer and more decided than any real oak could possibly be. The painter, by name Dan Dunbar, an artist as well as a grainer of oak or any other wood, no doubt wishing to immortalise himself contrived amidst the curves and turnings of the graining to work in among the flourishes as if part of them the letters of his name. By many it was not noticed, but the quick eye of A. K. H. B. detected it at once, and Sunday after Sunday not only had he the sleeping Bailies and Delegates before him, but "Dan Dunbar" in bold letters spread over the front

of the gallery, as prominent as the numerous I's which characterised his essays, which appeared afterwards as the "Recreations of a Country Parson." It is told of A. K. H. B. that when printers were setting up these esays their font of type always ran short of capital I's, so one can imagine the annoyance of anyone so egotistical seeing "Dan Dunbar" so prominent every Sunday—a common painter, too—on the front of the gallery, which, apart altogether from sleepers or painters, was too near the pulpit at any rate.

SUPPLEMENTARY.

There was issued from the "Observer" Office in 1884 a volume of Sketches and Traditions of Auld Ayr, intending to illustrate Ayr in the beginning of the last century. That volume has for some time been out of print, and it is proposed now to reissue the principal parts yet as a supplement to the foregoing Reminiscences. The whole volume may thereby give a most complete picture of Auld Ayr as it was in the 19th century.

J. M. F.

AYR 100 YEARS AGO.

Auld Ayr.

THE TOWN OF AYR

WAS so called undoubtedly from the very ancient Celtic name of Ayr, on the banks whereof the county town is so beautifully situated. There was probably a castle on the same site as that of the town, and under its protection, according to the practice of rude ages, a village arose. It is difficult to say when the newly erected village on the Ayr became the county town, or, in other words when the Celtic counties of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham were formed into a county. Tradition reports that a battle was fought in this parish in the valley of Dalrymple, between the Scots and Picts, before the Christian era, wherein both the Sovereigns, Fergus and Coilus, were slain.

The name of the burgh seems to have undergone various changes in its orthography. In all the early Royal charters it is invariably written Arc, as also throughout the whole obituary of Saint John's Church, and all the monastic records that have been yet examined.

The town existed long before the erection of the Burgh, being understood to have given birth to the celebrated John Scott, surnamed Erigena, who lived in the ninth century, in high favour with Charles the Bold, of France. The river, which in one or two ancient writings is found to be written Ar, is supposed to have given its name to the town. About the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century the name appears written Air, and frequently Aire. All the records of Council, till towards the end of the 17th century, adopt this orthography. Since that time the name is invariably written Ayr.

The inhabitants of Ayr throughout the Scottish period extending from 843 A.D. to 1097 were governed as a Celtic people, upon the Celtic principle, which were not very favourable to peace, or very promotive

of prosperity. In addition to the domestic feuds of an irascible people, they were too frequently disquieted during that period by the appearance of the Danish rovers in the Frith of Clyde, which was not crowded for ages with commercial shipping. A feeble system and a weak Government was not calculated by any means to ensure comfort to the people. During the change which ensued upon the accession of Edgar, in 1079, when the Scoto-Saxon period began, different maxims of law and new modes of government were introduced; the people of this district were benefitted by the alteration of a system which was radically bad. The introduction of the municipal law produced the change of the Celtic maxims and rude customs for the Anglo-Norman principles and more salutary laws.

ROYAL BURGH.

In the 32nd year of the reign of King William the Lion, the town of Ayr was erected into a Royal Burgh by charter, which is preserved in the Archives of the town, of which the following is a literal translation from the Latin:—

"William, by the grace of God King of Scots, To the Bishops, Abbots, Earls, Barons, Justiciars, Sheriffs, Provosts, Officers, and all honest men of the whole realm, clergy, and laity, Greeting: Let those present and to come, know, that I have a Burgh at my new castle upon Arc; and have granted to the same burgh, and to my burgesses therein residing, all liberties, and all free customs, which in my other burghs, and my burgesses therein residing throughout my kingdom, enjoy. I have also established therein a market-day every Saturday. I have also granted to the burgesses who shall come thither to inhabit my burgh, and shall be there settled and residing, that they be free from toll and all other customs, for their chattels in demain, through my whole realm. I therefore strictly forbid, that no one in my kingdom exact from any of them, toll or any other custom for their chattels in demain, upon my whole forfeiture. I have also granted to my same burgh, and to my burgesses who shall be settled and residing in that burgh, the Fivepenny-land which pertains to the town of Arc, by the bounds underwritten: Namely, from Inverdon, up into Inverpolcurtecan; and from Inverpolcurtecan, up to Crottun; and so along the Curtecan, on to Curtecan-head; and so from Curtecan-head, ascending along Boghesken, on to Monedamderg: and so from Monedamderg, along the syke, on into Monemethonac; and from Monemethonac, along the syke, on into Pollecleuan; and so along Pollecleuan on into Lochfergus; and from Lochfergus, descending on into Dufhat; and from Dufhat, descending along the syke, on to the rivulet on the east side of Drumnesauel; and from Drumnesauel rivulet, descending on into the syke on the west side of that rivulet: and so along that syke, on into Pollecloncerangali; and so along Pollecloncerangali, on into Dufloch: and from thence on into Pollemulin; and so alongPollemulin, descending on into the Arc; and so along the Arc, descending on into the sea. I have also granted to my burgesses residing in the same, that with each full toft of theirs, that they may have six acres of land, which they shall have cleared of wood, within the foresaid five penny-land, to make their own profit thereof: Paying yearly to me, for each toft, and six acres of land thereto adjacent, xii. pennies. I therefore command and strictly charge that all men who shall have come with their merchandise to

that my foresaid burgh, to sell and buy, may have my sure peace, and use the market, and return well and in peace. I also strictly charge, that at Mach, and Karnebuth, and Lowdun, and Crosecon, and Lachtalpin toll, and other customs, which are due to the burgh, be given and received. I therefore strictly forbid, that no one presume to carry away toll, or any other custom, which of right he ought to pay to my foresaid burgh; beyond the foresaid bounds, I strictly charge that all men residing within the foresaid bounds, be assisting to my serjeants, for maintaining my right, and for apprehending and attaching him, who shall have carried away, or attempted to carry away tolls, or any other custom belonging to my foresaid burgh, beyond the foresaid bounds. Witnesses: Florence, Elect of Glasgow, my Chancellor; Walter and William, my chaplains; Philip de Valoniis, my Chamberlain; Robert de Londoniis, my son; William de Boscho, and Hugh, my clerks; William de Valoniis; Thomas de Colvil; Ronald de Crawford; at Lanarc, xxi. day of May."

By this charter the territory of the town is described as including almost the whole of that large portion of country which lies between the rivers Doon and Ayr, reaching about six miles from the mouths of these rivers. The greater part of this large territory the town has since disposed of in feu, and otherwise, comprising the whole parishes of Ayr and Alloway—the one being denominated the Burrowfield of Ayr, and the other the Barony of Alloway. The lands are nearly all feued. The magistrates are still the superiors of these lands in their official capacity.

The town of Ayr was enclosed from a very early period by iron gates placed at the two different extremities of the town—the one at the corner of Saint John Street, and the other a little above the Old Tower. These gates have been removed many years ago, although spacious enough to occasion no obstruction.

This Burgh appears to have at all times stood high in favour with the different Monarchs of Scotland, of which its various charters bear ample testimony. Its extent, as described in the charter of erection before quoted, is perhaps larger than that of any other burgh in Scotland, being bounded on the north and south by the rivers Ayr and Doon, on the west by the sea, and extending to Lochfergus. The territory of the burgh is described as "quinque nummatas terræ," which a translator of the charter has rendered five nummats of land, as if by a nummat was meant a certain extent or measure of land. In a subsequent charter from Robert I., dated at Dunfermline, the lands of Alloway are denominated "quinque denariatus terræ," which is certainly to be understood a five penny or five merk-land, according to some valuation which had taken place, and "quinque nummatas terræ" as the same import. According to the different valuations of lands, they are to be found denominated merk-lands, shilling-lands, or pound-lands, and nummatas or denariatas terræ, in the rude Latin of the times, must be considered as the rate of valuation, and not as the extent of the lands.

The reign of William the Lion, by whom this charter is granted, commenced anno 1165. He died in 1214. Among the many privileges he conferred on the burgesses was that of acquiring a certain portion of the lands which they shall have cleared of wood (quas extirpaverint), paying 12 pennies yearly for each six acres. In a charter of his son, Alexander II. (about 1236), relating to Alloway, the burgesses are prohibited from using the wood of these lands but for useful purposes, and for their own accommodation. "Non ardebunt, nec dabunt nec vendunt, nec aliquo modo destruent, sed solummodo capient quod necessarium est ad propria ædificia sua de Are, et ad proprias Naves suas de Are faciendas."

The whole "territorium burgi" thus appears to have been at that time covered with wood, or one entire forest. Many roots and pieces of oak and other timber are at this day found in various places, evincing this to have been the case.

"THE WICKED TOUN O' AYR"—WHY SO CALLED.

It is singular that no correspondent of "Notes and Queries," so far as we are aware, has hitherto made inquiry as to how this very respectable royal burgh came to be distinguished—par excellence—as "the wicked toun." It is perhaps not a very gracious subject to dilate upon, and its worthy denizens may not thank us for our voluntary labour in elucidating the point; still, as we view the matter merely in an antiquarian light, we may be held exonerated of all improper feelings on the subject.

> "Now, Robertson, harangue nae mair,
> But steek your gab for ever;
> Or try the wicked toun o' Ayr,
> For there they'll think you clever."

It is not to be conceived, at the same time, that Burns was the fabricator of the libel. He merely gave it currency. Had he coined the accusation for the nonce, his satire would have fallen pointless. But having reiterated a well understood fama it became powerful, and is likely to be as lasting as the town itself. Burns latterly seems to have felt some compunction on the subject—some slight twinge of conscience for having so "damned to immortal fame" the ancient capital of his native county; and, as in his "Elegy on Tam Samson," he hastened to make amends by a per contra, in the well-known lines in "Tam o' Shanter,"—

> "Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
> For honest men and bonnie lasses."

Complimentary and true as these lines may be, however, nothing can wash out the original stain, and "the wicked toun o' Ayr" remains indelibly imprinted on her escutcheon. We, at the same time, by no means coincide in the justice of the accusation, but, as a matter of curiosity, shall endeavour to account for its origin.

As the county town, and the consequent resort of the principal proprietors in the vicinity, Ayr became the focus of many of those feuds by which the district was disturbed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was particularly the case in regard to the quarrels of the Kennedies of Carrick and the Craufurds and Campbells of Kyle—all of which clans had numerous cadets and partisans among the burgesses. In the great feud between the Cassillis and Bargany branches of the Kennedies, which terminated in the "Auchendrane Tragedy" (11th May, 1602), the inhabitants of Ayr took a decided part. It was while these dissensions were at their height (between February and November of the above year) that the celebrated John Welsh became minister of Ayr. Although Popery had been nominally abolished in 1560, he was the first to preach, under the new regime, in the ancient parish church of St John. According to his own statement, as well as that of his biographers, he found the burgh in a

very wicked state indeed. "When he had first taken up his residence in that town," they say, "the place was so divided into factions, and filled with bloody conflicts, a man could hardly walk the streets with safety; wherefore Mr Welsh made it his first undertaking to remove the bloody quarrellings, but he found it very difficult work; yet such was his earnestness to pursue his design that many times he would risk betwixt two parties of men fighting, even in the midst of blood and wounds. He used to cover his head with a head-piece before he went to separate these bloody enemies, but would never use a sword, that they might see he came for piece, and not for war; and so by little and little he made the town a peaceable habitation. His manner was, after he had ended a skirmish amongst his neighbours, and reconciled these bitter enemies, to cause cover a table upon the street, and there brought the enemies together; and, beginning with prayer, he persuaded them to profess themselves friends, and then to eat and drink together. Then last of all, he ended the work with singing a psalm: and after the rude began to observe his example, and listen to his heavenly doctrine, he came quickly to that respect amongst them, that he became not only a necessary counsellor, without whose counsel they would do nothing, but an example to initiate; and so he buried the bloody quarrels."

Here, in these feuds, and the state in which Welsh is said to have found the community, we have one pretty satisfactory reason for the designation—"the wicked toun o' Ayr." Nor must it be forgotten that, down to the period of the Reformation, the royal burgh had been the seat of two dominical establishments—the Black and Grey Friars—besides the parish church, which supported a numerous priesthood. The inhabitants had therefore been thoroughly innoculated with the practices and pastimes tolerated under the Popish system; and, although many of the citizens had stood boldly forward in the ranks of the reform, still, when the bosom of Calvinism came to be strictly applied in sweeping up the "highways and by-ways," with a view to a pure renovation, it was found that a pretty numerous residue were inclined to adhere to their old pursuits and pleasures. This was the case especially in reference to the Sabbath day. The session-books record many case of desecration, such as "waulking (fulling) claith on the Sabbath day," "playing at the coppiboall in the kirk door on the Sabbath day," and indulging in other pastimes and "value games." In the time of Welsh one particularly wicked person, "John Dalrumple, chopman," was summoned before the session "to declare ye caus quhy he hes not satisfied for his odious blasphemie, in taking pieces of flesh, and casting it fra him, said that was ye flesh of Chryst, as himself confessit befoir ye sessioun holdin ye xvi. day of Apryle, 1604." Ayr had also been, from the earliest times, a garrison town, and, of course, the resort of a loose and immoral soldiery. Edward I. maintained a strong force in the castle during his dominancy, and Blind Harry has given a graphic picture of the tumultuous state of the streets when Wallace killed the English "churl with his ain staff." Nor was the picture much changed when the ancient castle had given way to the Cromwellian fort in 1652. The soldiers of Old Noll appeared, from the session-books of Ayr, to have been in no degree superior in morality. These records mention the fact of an English soldier having been scourged through the streets for adultery. The wide-spread fame of "Maggie Osborne" and her cantrips may also have tended to deepen the general impression of the peculiar wickedness of the town of Ayr. In still more recent times (1729), that most industrious and perhaps most indiscriminate of all gleaners, Wodrow, records another circumstance which must have brought the cognomen of "wicked" not only more immediately

but more intelligibly before the religious eye of the "douce" community at the commencement of the last century. Under the date, June of the above year, he records the circumstance as follows:—

"Things are come to a terrible length among us. This month I am well informed that lately in Air toun, where other sort of meetings were wont to be, there is a meeting of men who deserve little better name than that of atheists. On Sabbath, in time of divine worship, men of some character, Mr Charles Cochrane, James Dalrymple, clerk, and many others, to the number of seven or eight, who, instead of worshipping with other Christians, meet in a tavern and read 'Woolston's Discourses on Miracles,' and ridicules all religion. That ordinarily, in contempt, they are seen to dismiss when the congregation dismiss [Forbes Mackenzie was not then in existence], and though Mr M'Derment knows of it, and Mr Hunter,* no notice is taken of it; and James Dalrymple, one of them, hath, since it was known, got token to communicate though even otherwise he is a drunken, loose man."

* Minister of Ayr.

This is direct and palpable evidence against thee, thou "wicken toun o' Ayr." But thou wert merry as well as wicked, for the old rhyme says—

"They're a' born wantin' breeks,
They're a' born bare;
They're a' born wantin' breeks,
The merry lads o' Ayr."

Certainly it was a jolly town in the olden time, and was so but recently, if reports speak truly. As the capital of the county, Ayr has always been the chief seat of the district law courts, and the principal winter residence of the surrounding landed proprietors. It was consequently a place of wealth and gaiety, and might well deserve the distinctive adjective of "merry." Horse-racing, in defiance of the thunders of the pulpit, was first instituted by the wicked and merry lads of Ayr in 1698, when the magistrates gave a prize of a silver disk (quoit), to be run for over the sands on the ninth day of August. Of course, balls and all the contingent varieties of mirth attending races would follow them as now.

But the magistrates themselves were jovial fellows. They ate, drank, and spent the funds of the burgh, all for the "honour and glory" of the good town—making stated peregrinations through the most delectable of the taverns. The following is a copy of the account given in to the treasurer on the 10th September, 1726, for what had been consumed in this way during the year:—

"To John Huchisone of Underwood, vintner in Ayr, ...	£299 18 6
Rachael M'Dermett, relict of James Houstoun, writer in Ayr, ...	164 0 0
James Greig, Deacon Convener of the Trades, ...	16 0 0
	£480 15 0 Scots."

Only two years before this the town was in such a bankrupt state that the clear income of the burgh only amounted to £469 1s 4d, less by £11 13s 8d than the sum spent in supporting "the honour and dignity of the burgh in the public houses."

"A prison is a house of care,
A place where none can thrive,
A touchstone true to try a friend,
A grave for men alive.
Sometimes a place of right,
Sometimes a place of wrong,
Sometimes a place for jades and thieves,
And honest men among."

So said the rhyme inscribed on a board in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian"—and no doubt the author (an old English poet, it is said) was right; but "the merry lads o' Ayr" thought differently. So far from being "a house of care," the tolbooth became one of the most uproarious scenes of feasting and mirth. No sooner had a respectable member of the community—town or landward—been incarnated, than his friends flocked around him, and the jail became a sort of hotel on the most equable principle. To such an extent did the practice attain, that the magistrates, with much apparent reluctance, at length interfered, and, on the 21st December, 1659, it was enacted that "Prisoners within the Tolbuith [be] dischargit from holding any feasting, treat, or banquet within the prison; and that no person above the number of One shall be allowed to dine or sup with any such prisoner."

Most considerate and worthy dignitaries! The tolerance of even One, to say "here's to ye," showed the truly jovial nature of their constitutions! But even the merry turnkeys were affected with the same benevolence. In 1780, James Brown, one of the officers, was so overwhelmed with "the MILK of human kindness," on one occasion, that he locked James Campbell, a prisoner for debt, on the outside in place of the in!

THE BLACK GANG.

At the time referred to—early in the present century—there was, as already observed, neither gas-light nor policeman in the burgh. The town was lighted, or rather "darkness made visible," by a few solitary oil-lamps; and the shop windows were "illuminated" after a similar fashion. Though, on the whole, a moral, quiet place—there being only two houses of fame on both sides of the river, and not a "nymph of the pave" to be seen anywhere—yet during the long dark nights of winter, considerable mischief use to be committed by the more reckless of the young, as well as positive injury by the evil-disposed, of whom a numerous sprinkling is to be found in all communities. The consequence was that not a few cases of robbery occurred, and many assaults experienced by the peacable and unwary inhabitants, who had occasion to move abroad at unreasonable hours.

To counteract this state of matters a number of young men—all, less or more, well connected—bound themselves together, with the view of perambulating the streets during the worst period of the night. They proved to be a formidable band, and certainly no solitary blackguard durst ply his vocation within their reach. Numerous opponents, in counter bands and otherwise, fell before their prowess; but, having cleared the streets of all pests, they, in turn, became troublesome to the inhabitants; and, from their increasing misdeeds became known by the sobriquet of "The Black Gang." They were expert in the use of their fists, and all were afraid of them. At length, having gained a rather unenviable notoriety by their pugilistic encounters, not to

speak of their drunken orgies—for there was no Forbes Mackenzie Act in these days—the gang broke up, some of the members having left the town, and others betaken themselves to the paths of peace and sobriety. We knew more than one of the celebrated "Black Gang" who latterly sat at the Council Board, and carried on business respectably on their own account.

John Hunter had been one of this band. He was well up in years when we became acquainted with him. He and his wife Kate added to their means by keeping one or two young men as lodgers. The writer happened to be one of them. John was a quiet, sober man—rather taciturn than otherwise; but Kate took a ramble occasionally, and not unfrequently have we seen John kindly helping her into bed, to sleep off the effects of her booze. John had been bred a carpenter, but at this time he was mostly employed about the shore, where he was much esteemed. He took charge for many a day of Provost Fullarton's pleasure boat, and usually accompanied him in his frequent excursions to the Lady Isle.

John and his help-mate could boast of but little education between them. They could read, but to write was a difficulty. What money Kate had occasion to lay out for her lodgers, during the week, was carefully notched down upon the appropriate stick at night. John had a stick for each lodger, one end of which was devoted to pence, the other to shillings—and there he sat by the fireside, with knife in hand, nicking away at the dictation of Kate. We thought his mode of book-keeping funny at first, but became reconciled to it when we felt the accuracy of the system, and knew that the accounts of the Exchequer were kept by tallies in a similar manner down to a comparatively recent period.

John had all the appearance of having been a strong, muscular man, about five feet ten, with a chest more deep and round than broad. One day, the late Bailie Dick, then a boy, happened to be strolling up the High Street. He passed an Irishman, stripped for battle—for Irishmen were brawlers in these days as well as now—and shouting for "ever a Scotchman" to turn out. Little Dick felt annoyed to hear his countrymen browbeat and challenged in this fashion, so he made "speedy heels" towards a close near the "Auld Tower," at the head of which he knew John Hunter had his workshop. He found John busy at his bench, told him what he had seen, and that he wanted him to come and give the Irishman a thrashing. "What like is he?" said John. Dick described the brawler as well as he could. John tucked up his white apron round his waist, and following his informant, proceeded down the close, at the mouth of which they saw the Irishman, shouting, as he went on, for "ever a Scotchman." Turning his eyes to where John stood, he altered his challenge with instinctive cunning—"Ever a Scotchman, save Jack Hunter!" By this time John stood forward, and instantly knocked him down, saying, "Ye'll no be the waur o' that at ony rate!" Leaving him sprawling, John coolly walked up the close, and resumed his plane.

The well-known Adam Carnie, of the "Advertiser," was another of this famous gang. He was an eccentric in some respects, much given to violent swearing, and, though often at feud, is known to have possessed a kind heart all the time. He strenuously opposed the gas when first introduced, and continued to burn candle in the shop long after his neighbours were enjoying the better light. Taking umbrage at his banker one day, he withdrew his whole deposit, and going home, threw the bundle of notes into an old chest, saying, with an oath, they might lie there till they rotted—never thinking all the time that he was thus materially promoting the interest of Hunters & Co.

Adam had a pretty considerable share in the wood-ship, "Magog," so well known by her numerous trips between Ayr and St John's. After retiring from the "Advertiser," the "Magog" became his hobby. To watch her arrival in the bay, to board her with the pilot, and see her disloaded, as well as to have her equipped again for sea, was his delight. To hear him speak of the ship, one would have thought that he himself had been at St John's with her, and not the captain.

Another of the "Black Gang" worthies was old M'Ilwraith, one of the most inoffensive men in the burgh. He was one of those, however, who never got old in the real sense of the word. A keen angler, we have met him wading in the Doon, fishing in company with his grandson, as eagerly as if he too had been a boy. He would be near seventy at this time. Some years afterwards he went out to Canada as a settler, with some members of his family; and it was remarked that, amongst his "household gods," he had his fowling-piece and his fishing-rod very carefully packed.

THE RADICAL MOVEMENT IN 1819.

The inhabitants of Ayr were good Whigs of the old school, but, having little to do with manufactures, they did not appreciate the levelling notions that began to prevail soon after the peace which followed Waterloo. The purposed rising of 1819 found little favour in their eyes; but Ayr being a county town, with barracks capable of accommodating a considerable number of soldiers, the Fourth Veteran Battalion was stationed in it, ready to proceed to any quarter when their services might be required. They were a precious sample of the heroes with whom Wellington had fought his Continental battles. One could hardly fancy a set of greater dare-devils. And what flogging the poor fellows were subjected to! They might in some cases deserve it, but the punishment inflicted was a disgrace to humanity; and often, at least in the opinion of the people, wantonly indulged in.

On one occasion a soldier was suspected of having abstracted a package of goods from a draper's shop. There was no evidence adduced at the court-martial, beyond the fact that he had been in the shop in question, and that the parcel could not be found. He was sentenced to be flogged, and the award of the Court would have been carried into effect on the morrow; but luckily the shopman found the missing parcel, and, hastening to the barracks, saved the prisoner from his doom. The soldier of the present day cannot be too thankful for the happy change which has been brought about in the army.

On the occasion of two soldiers being punished by the lash, the feelings of the onlookers were so much harrowed at the brutality of the affair—one of them being carried off more dead than alive—that they gave rise to some manifestations on the subject, much to the annoyance of the officers. Two of them got over the barrack-wall, where the punishment was always inflicted, so as to take a near-cut through the green. Mr James Murdoch, then tacksman of the field, challenged him for trespassing on his property. The officers turned upon him, accusing him of being the cause of the riotous disposition of the crowd, and immediately ordered the company of soldiers to clear the wall, which they did with their bayonets. Mr Murdoch, however, brought an action against the officers, and obtained damages.

The town, as it had done on many former occasions of public requirement, furnished two or three companies of Volunteers. The colonel was Hamilton of Rozell, but they were in reality commanded

by Major Dugald Campbell, a Peninsular and Waterloo officer. Not long after they were embodied, they were hurriedly called out one Sabbath night, in consequence of a report that the town was to be attacked and the banks plundered by a large body of Radicals. The Volunteers paraded the town that and several nights afterwards, but no enemy appeared. The first alarm over, they usually spent the evenings at head-quarters, the Court-House, in card-playing and toddy-drinking. Major Campbell died at his house at Whitletts, and was buried, with military honours, in the church-yard of Ayr, where a head-stone, with an inscription, was erected to his memory.

The Deil's Burial.

No record exists so capable of affording the reader a glimpse of the social condition of Ayr in the first quarter of the century as the poem bearing the above title. It was written about seventy years ago, and created much diversion locally at the time. The author was John Goldie, "the Poetic Seaman," as he is called in "The Contemporaries of Burns," in which it was printed for the first time in 1840. The author was an illegitimate child of John Goldie, shipmaster, better known as "Scant Goudie," and born in 1788. Brought up with his mother, his education had been much neglected; but he was of a lively, ingenious turn of mind, and acquired knowledge as it were intuitively. He went to sea and became an expert seaman. After visiting a great many parts of the world, and been present at the taking of Rangoon in 1824, he was lost in a small craft, which he partly owned, between Ayr and Campbeltown, in 1827. There are several blanks in the poem, which, it is to be regretted, we cannot supply. As far as known, we have given, at the bottom of each page, a key to the various names mentioned in the poem. The descendants of several of these still reside in our midst, and we daresay they will not take offence at what was a good-natured squib in which their parent or grand-parent figured. Any ill-nature visible will be excused for the humour which runs through the whole.

THE DEIL'S BURIAL.

What dreadful news is this they tell,
  Nae doubt ye'll a' hae heard o't?
Rab Goudie says they've killed the Deil
  And swears to every word o't.
Ane Robison, a noted Whig,
  We a' hae heard him brawlin',
Has seized the Gospel gun sae big,
  And left the foe a-sprawlin'
    In the street this day.

Auld Clootie, like a hutch o' coals,
  Lay streekit at his feet,
Gied twa three horrid eldrich squeals,
  Syne lay as deaf's a peat;
When Andrew Hunter, daun'ring hame,
  Just at the time he fell,
Roar'd out—"Od blast your sooty saul,
  You'd better been in hell
    Than here this day.

The Dysters' Deacon he cam' up,
An' sair, sair did he greet;
He's ta'en the corpse to his best room
Till a' the frien's would meet.
Wi' burial letters sealed in black,
He sent his man, Will, roun';
Himsel' to buy a winding sheet
To Menzies's ga'ed doun,
Richt vext that day.

Rab heard his tale, and, swearing, said
He ne'er wad use his frien' sae;
Syne bade him just gae back again,
An' buy't frae burgher Lindsay.
The Deacon left him in a huff,
Telt Lindsay o' his scoffin';
Says he, "Gude faith, ye'll get the claith
Gif our clerk gets the coffin
To mak' this day."

Says the Deacon, "There's my wauket loof,
I winna put it by him;"
He sent his man alang the brig
That same nicht to employ him:
He bad him mak' it just the size
O' muckle Will M'Clymont,
And gart him send for Painter Waite,
To paint his age and name on't
In style that day.

When Coachie Boyd had heard the news,
He caper'd like a fairy,
Danced doun to Cooper Millikens,
And telt him a' the story.
The cooper flung his hat roof high
Syne curst their Whiggish manners;
The very boyne that he had made
He dashed it a' in flinners,
In rage that day.

Will Duncan, at the Whitletts Toll,
A holy, sober man,
Whene'er the letter he had read,
Flang doun his spade, an' ran.
A cabbage-stock he just had raised,
That weighed nineteen Scots pouns,
Was sent in to the Cross of Ayr
An' selt for bread an' buns
To eat that day.

When auld Bankhead got word that they
Had put the coffin by him,
He caper'd, danc'd, an' sigh'd, an' pray'd,
An' maist fell to the crying.
He vow'd he ne'er would touch the corpse,
He was sae sair affrontit;
The very wood he had prepar'd,
Flung in the fire, and burnt it,
In wrath that day.

John Adam next and T——
Cam' frae the far Tounhead,
The tears were drappin' doun their cheeks
Like ony amber bead.
John Gibb and honest Saddler Brown
Were set for twa door-keepers;
An' they let Adam Cairnie in,
For he had on his weepers,
Richt white that day.

Park an' M'Kinlay next cam' up,
Wi' twa three Newton weavers;
The Deacon rose, and kicked them out,
An' ca'd them unbelievers.
Park flew into a dreadfu' rage,
An' said he firmly hop'd
To see his pats, his yarns, an' vats
Ta'en to the Cross an' roup'd
Some market day.

James Miller cam' alang the brig,
And Ramsay by his side;
James swore he hadna been sae vext
Since the day he lost his bride.

* * * * * *

[This hiatus we cannot now supply, but the names introduced were—The Rev. William Schaw, Old Light Burgher minister; William M'Whirter, grocer, Kilmarnock Street; James Kirkwood, shoemaker; "Bowsy"; William Smith, very pompous; Rodman, a respectable merchant at one time, but becoming unfortunate by a second marriage, he wandered from town to town both in England and Scotland, always maintaining the appearance of a person in better circumstances; John Brown; M'Creath, boot and shoemaker; Gregg, do.; Forsyth, bookseller, an eccentric character; Bailie Ewing, hardware merchant; John Hunter, do.; M'Kean; Smith; Henry Cowan, better known as "Whisky Henry."]

Will Anderson now cross'd the brig,
Wi' his man, Robin Neil;
An' naething for the kist wad tak,
Since it was for the Deil.
Lang Skipper Jock cam up the gaet
Wi' the mortcloth in a pock;
He gat it frae the Butchers' Club,
For brawly they kenn'd Jock
Was vext that day.

Frank Nicol, Hawthorn, Barber Lees,
Cam stauchrin' up frae Mallie's;
In blacken'd weeds, as drunk's ye please,
For they were hired for saulies.
M'Hutcheon's baker boys cam next,
Wi' basketfuls o' bakes;
An' twa o' Deacon Dickie's men
Brocht up the stools and spakes,
Richt black that day.

The hour was now approaching fast,
An' mony an idle servant
Was gatherin' roun' about the doors,
To see the Deil's interment.
The friens they a' cam flockin' in,
As fast as Willie bade them;
They were obliged to steek the doors,
The house wad hardly haud them,
'Twas sae crammed that day.

Then cam Black Jock an' Johnnie Baird,
Doun frae the far Mill Vennel;
Pate Paterson to say the grace,
Wi' drucken Johnnie Donal;
His wife cam stampin' after him,
Like ony Maggie Howe;
An' cursed him to come out frae 'mang
Sic an unholy crew
As them that day.

* * * * * *

[Here another hiatus occurs, which we cannot supply; but the characters referred to were—Thomas Gray, grocer; James Rodger, flesher. He was an eccentric, and never could believe that the earth went round the sun. "Nonsense, Kerr," (a) he would say, "on our feet the ae day, and on our head the ither." John M'Lure, tobacconist. He was a worthy, religious person. He and some others were returning from a preaching at Ochiltree, when they were assaulted by a party of men and women. He was so much hurt that he died immediately. Two colliers, named Anderson and Glen, were executed for their share in the murder. Andrew Gemmel, merchant—said to have been the heir of "Edie Ochiltree"; Thomas Ross, tinsmith; David Auld, perfumer—latterly of Doonbrae; John Guthrie, tobacconist; William M'Laren, gardener and seedsman; Bauldy Tremble, deacon of the coopers—a strange person, much addicted to swearing; Achibald Sword, another curious character. He was a cork-cutter, and best known by his sobriquet of "Corkie Sword." Thomas King, wright and undertaker—best known as "Tam King"; Samuel Heron, long known as a druggist. It used to be a saying that, if such a thing "did ye nae ill, it would do ye ye nae guid, like Samuel Heron's pills." William Murdoch, chandler—better known as Buonaparte, from his likeness to the Emperor Napolean I.; Murdoch, or the "stout barber," so called from his corpulence.]

(a) A saddler, usually called "Coup Kerr," from his singing the song of "Johnnie Coup."

Wee grocer Gibb neist waddles up,
Like some fat goosy-gander,
Take aff his hat, and in the pass
Fa's owre young Alexander.
The wean roar'd out, till at the Cross
Ye micht hae heard the screech o't;
Wha think ye cam' to its relief,
But slater Hughie Highet,
Richt fou that day.

The merchants a', baith up an' doun,
Were fast their windows steekin',
An' pushing up to see the fun,
In crowds a' het and reekin'.
Even hardware David barr'd his door,
To show that he was civil;
Put on his new-soled shoon, and sent
The profits to the Devil,
For him that day.

An' skelpin' up like some race-horse,
Few there were rinnin' harder,
Fa's in at Gilbert Hazel's door,
Wi' Jamie Sprent the barber.
Says Sprent, "lad, ye may cock your nose,
An' swagger hame rejoicin';
But, by my faith, before we part,
I'll gar ye wat my wizen,
Wi' a gill this day."

Said David, "whisky's unco dear,
An' siller's grown sae scant now;
Besides, I ne'er did Clootie fear,
I'm turned ower great a saunt now.
I dinna drink till beastly fou,
Gang hame an' clout the wife aye;
Nane can deny but that I've walked
Quite single-eyed through life aye,
Baith nicht an' day.

The crowds were dancin' roun' the door,
Mad wi' sic thochts o' freedom;
An' ilka ane that popped in,
A hearty cheer they gied him.
Claith Jamie now sends Andrew Lees
To fetch a guard o' sodgers;
Or else John Sillars, wi' his pike,
To keep the crowd in order
An' peace that day.

But they catch'd Robin Hamilton
Gaun up to see the spree,
An' gart him stan' an' sing a verse
O' "Oswald's Cavalrie."
Rab roar'd the weel-kent ditty up,
He was in sic a hurry;
But nobler game soon hove in sight
In shape o' Archie Murray.
Maist fou that day.

* * * * * *

The Deacon's house was cramm'd sae fou,
Yet crowds were up still flockin',
Till muckle Gibb was almost smoor'd,
And Johnnie Boyd was chokin'.
Then Will Dunlop ran down the stairs,
Changed berths wi' Gibb the tailor,
An' clashed the door richt in the face
O' Willie Paul, the jailer,
Wi' a daud that day.

Pate Paterson now rises up,
Some mournful tale to tell,
Put on an elwand face, an' said
Agrace as lang's himsel'.
An' clean caup out was now the toast
O' ilka drink that comes;
An' mony a deadly gash was made
In Willie Duncan's buns
Wi' their teeth that day.

Now a' the nabs, in sable weeds,
Are to the maut cross dashin',
To walk in state an' meet the corpse,
Behint their frien' Hugh Wason
Ilk vessel's flags, at half-mast high,
The mournfu' tidings tell;
An' Mysie Duck is sent wi' speed
To ring the double bell,
In haste that day.

[Here the Poet enumerates most of the officials and other chief men of the burgh, among whom were Provost Dunlop, Sheriff Aiton, Robert Robertson, writer, and Dr Bone, a very eccentric person—he had been long on board a man-of-war; Patrick Hume, merchant and ship-owner; John Aitken, shoemaker; John Bell, Charles Shaw, John Kirkwood, shoemaker; Rev. Messrs Auld and Cuthill, of the old and new churches; William Cowan, of Hunters & Co., bankers, afterwards Provost; Alexander Murdoch, procurator-fiscal; Provost Campbell, Dr Whiteside, Dr Paterson, a celebrated physician, afterwards of London —he had a daughter equally famous for her beauty; James Telfer, wood merchant; Robert M'Whinnie, watch-maker; James Murdoch, writer and messenger, better known as the sobriquet of "Crunch." He was a great pedestrian. When in Edinburgh on one occasion, he followed the crowd to the castle esplanade to see an eclipse which had been duly heralded. When questioned about it on his return to Ayr, he said "It was a total failure!"]

They now begin like volunteers,
To range themselves in order;
The magistrates were in the midst,
The writers on the border.
When Ebie Shaw, a frugal soul,
For ever bent on hainin',
Ran hame to change his hat and coat,
In case it micht be rainin'
Or snaw that day.

The officers took aff their hats,
An' show'd their heads weel pouther'd;
An' like a sergeant o' the corps,
Their crape an' halbert shouther'd.
John Sillars, wha gat bleezin' fou,
Began to reel an' stutter,
Gied Willie Kerr a dreadfu' drive.
An' laid him in the gutter,
Wi' a clash that day.

Then Banker Will roared out to get
  Twa constables wi' batons,
Wha march'd John up the nineteen steps,
  To bide among the rattons.
John swore drink hadna cross'd his craig,
  Mair than the bairns unborn;
And aye's he stagger'd up the stair,
  He curs'd wee shoon and corns
    For that, that day.

The nabs moved on an' met the corpse;
  On reaching Hunter's Bank,
They wheel'd about in marching style,
  To join the mournfu' rank.
The mob seemed quite delighted,
  They thocht it famous sport,
An' gied three hearty cheers as they
  Turned up the Auld Kirk Port,
    In shouts that day.

They reached the grave in solemn pace,
  An' gathered roun' the coffin
Were mony a saint wi' tearfu' e'e,
  Though, faith, their hearts were laughin'.
Then John M'Doul, wi' cautious han',
  The coffin did uncover;
It split! an' Clootie jumped out,
  Just like a flash o' pouther,
    In flames that day!

Then ika ane wi' mettle heels
  Was doun the Kirk Port skelpin',
Some lost their hats and shoon, and some
  Wi' broken heids were yelpin';
When John M'Doul* had gather'd a'
  His spades and shools thegither,
Cam' hin'most doun the Port, and said,
  "The grave will do anither—

* The Gravedigger.

The Ayr of Ayr.

Such was the name of a fast-sailing clipper-built vessel, the first of the kind that had ever belonged to the port. It had been a nobleman's yacht, and was intended to ply between Ayr and Glasgow, the old packet boat, of which "Skipper Paton" was long master, being too slow for the advancing notions of the times. "The Ayr of Ayr" belonged to a company—chiefly merchants—who intended to confer a benefit first, upon themselves; and secondly, upon the community, by a cheaper and more expeditious conveyance of goods to and from the Emporium of the West. The ship was looked upon with great favour by the inhabitants, and her trial trip—to Campbeltown—was witnessed by an immense crowd, who lined both sides of the harbour. This occurred in June, 1822.

The late John Brown, writer in Ayr, was a man of acknowledged talent. He had a playful fancy, and one of the readiest pens. He was connected with the "Ayr Courier," and its successor, the "Ayr Observer," taking a considerable share for some time in the literary management of both journals. He occasionally indulged in verses, and not a few of his poetical effusions found their way into private circles. No man, at the same time, could be more free from the conceit of authorship. He wrote for pleasure, not for the gratification of literary ambition. By accident we happen to be in possession of one or two of his pieces, amongst which is one entitled an "Epistle to a Friend," giving a description of the pleasure trip to Campbeltown.

Epistle to a Friend.

Dear Sir, ye ken I lately coft
The good sloop "Ayr of Ayr";
A gallant bark, and fit for sea,
In weather foul or fair.

Oft has she borne a Noble Duke,
And Lords and Knights beside;
Frae Merry England's verdant coast,
Far up the Frith o' Clyde.

But time and chance our fortunes turn,
'Tis even so wi' ships;
In place o' Lords and Ladies now,
The "Ayr" maun sail wi' cits.

Just t'ither day, wi' twenty such,
She spread her willing sail;
And bore away to Campbeltown,
Wi' less than half a gale.

But sic a crew! the Lord forfend
I ere should meet again;
They ate and drank, and sang and swore,
Withouten fear or shame.

Some gat importance frae their purse,
Some plum'd upo' their rank,
Some mended pots and candlesticks,
Some "struttit in a bank."

To tell their names a' ane by ane,
I canna spare ye time;
Besides 'twad be a shamefu' waste
O' my sma' stock o' rhyme.

Some gat their bread by sellin' yill,
Some drive or haud the plew,
Some live by braid-claith and the shears,
Some by the boot and shoe.

Some gathered taxes for the king,
Sae greedy and sae gleg;
A marker o' the Custom-dues
In daffin' brak his leg.

Some never occupation had,
Yet bummingly through life
They go, and mind its rubs no more
Than "Billy Fairy's wife."

Some writer chiels wha never heard
O' sic a thing as sin,
Had nearly sunk my bonnie bark
Wi' devilry and din.

Ane o' the squad his father curs'd;
He curs' his ain papa!
A generation far'er back,
He d——d them ane an' a'.

An Elder o' the holy kirk,
Sae pious and sae meek,
When tir'd o' wine and wickedness,
Retir'd a while to sleep.

A noisy wag swore he was dead,
And argu'd lang the case;
He gravely undertook, I vow,
To prove it to his face.

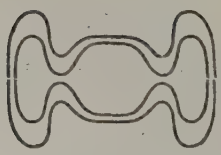
A son of Esculapius spruce,
Wi' pouches fu' o' salts;
A waistcoat o' the Dublin stripe,
A flute to play a waltz.

Ane clamb the riggin' and the mast,
Syne tried how he could swim,
Wi' boots and big coat, hat and stick,
He gallantly plunged in.

Some roar'd and sang, while others spu'd,
And some lay fast asleep;
'Twas plainly temptin' Providence,
To venture on the deep.

If ere the "Ayr" should be a wreck,
If ere she chance to foun'er;
I'll blame the deeds o' this sad trip;
Your servant, Sir,—The OWNER.

It was soon found, however, that even the "Ayr of Ayr" could not compete with steam, and she was disposed of to be replaced by a steam packet sailing between Ayr and Glasgow twice a-week. She bore the same name, and was considered a crack vessel at the time. She had not been long on the station, however, when one dark night, in going down the Clyde, she encountered the "Comet" steamer off Kempock, at Gourock, and ran her down. Thinking that his own vessel was sinking, the captain first made for the shore, and before he could return to the aid of the "Comet," sixty persons had found a watery grave. Had the "Comet," it is said, displayed her lights, and taken the usual precautions, the accident would not have occurred, and the captain of the "Ayr of Ayr" was blamed for hurrying so quickly from the scene of disaster; but no doubt, in the confusion of the moment, he did what he thought best to save his own vessel from going down in deep water. He felt it necessary, however, to go abroad, and the "Ayr of Ayr" was soon afterwards sold.



Ancient Religious Houses and other Antiquities of Ayr.

The different religious establishments at Ayr prior to the Reformation appear to be very imperfectly known. Some account of them, therefore, from sources that are authentic, may be curious as well as interesting to those having any degree of attachment to this ancient Burgh.

Saint John's Church.

The Burgh or Parish Church was dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, and is understood to have been founded in the twelfth century. The principal record from which any information is derived concerning it is its Obituary—a book in high preservation, the writing of which is beautiful, and ornamented with many letters in rubicon.

Saint John's Church remained entire, at least the exterior part of it, long after the erection of the Fort around it, and even after the Fort was dismantled. The above is a fair view of the building as it stood in 1652, when what is now known as the "Auld Kirk" was built in lieu of it.

The form of the Church was that of a cross, the nave or body being about double the length of the transcase of it. At the eastern end of the nave appears an elegant gothic window.

In the reign of Robert II., a calamity which seemed to threaten the ruin of this edifice called forth the royal protection for its preservation. Its situation very near the sea, and the loose soil on which it was built, rendered it liable to the severe effects of the western storms, which acted upon it so powerfully, as even to uncover the bodies of the dead in the cemetery around it. Robert, in order to avert this evil, granted a charter, anno 1381, offering as a gratification to those who should devise means of protecting the town church and cemetery from the violent blowing of sand, such part of the waste lands within the burgh as they should, by their labour or expense, render habitable, to be held by them and their heirs in free burgage for ever, on payment of a penny each pacata, a term not now under-

stood. This charter the king grants "precipue causa ecclesia Johanis Baptistae, quam in honore reverentia, et devotione, semper intendebam et intendam."

It does not appear, however, that the rewards held out by Robert had any effect. The annoyance from the blowing of the sand was afterwards much complained of by the inhabitants of the town, as appears from an application made to the Duke of Albany, Regent during the reign of Robert III., for liberty to straiten the Sandgate Vennel, in order to prevent the annoyance, which is threatening the destruction of the town. Liberty having been granted accordingly, an order to build the houses in a closer form was given by the Magistrates, dated 10th November, 1435. That a circumstance of this nature should have occasioned so much alarm appears at the present day almost incredible. Two causes have since contributed to remove the grievance complained of. The sea, which then approached much nearer the town, has, in the course of 400 years, considerably receded, as it has done on all the western shores of Europe; and a fortification constructed in the time of the Protectorate around the church of Saint John, has formed a complete barrier against the effects of sand blowing to both church and town. That the town at that early period must have suffered from it considerably appears from pavements of stone, at the depth of many feet, being now frequently discovered on digging for water or foundations of new buildings.

It may be thought that a church so well provided for the public service of religion was amply sufficient for the inhabitants of the burgh. Other religious houses, however, were established, one of which was of no inconsiderable importance. A monastery of Dominican Friars, or, as they are usually denominated, Preaching Friars (Fratres predicatores), was founded by William, Bishop of St Andrew's, in the year 1230. A charter was granted for this monastery by Alexander II., dated at Forfar, the 4th August, in the 28th year of his reign, being about 1242, by which he grants "Fratribus predicatoribus de Are, singulis annis, de primis firmis molendinorem et burgis viginti libras sterlingorum." The different charters and other papers relating to this convent are among the town's archives. Two only of these have seals appended to them, one the seal of the monastery, and the other that of Robert de Lyulitheou, one of the priors. Impressions of these seals have been taken on Paris plaster. They both bear the image of St Kathrine, the patroness of the convent. Alexander's charter is confirmed by one from Robert I., dated "Apud Girvan in Carryck," the 6th February, in the 23rd year of his reign; and another charter to the same effect is granted by David II., "Apud Villam de Are, ultimo die Junii," in the 15th year of his reign. These, with many other papers which belonged to the convent, are still in good preservation. This monastery was the first of the Dominican order established in Scotland. Its revenues were considerable, notwithstanding that those who entered into this order were required by its founder, St. Dominick, to take a vow of absolute poverty. None of the monastic orders in Europe enjoyed a higher degree of power and influence than the Dominicans, which they maintained by means often perfidious and cruel. Those established here acquired considerable wealth by bequests and donations, a number of which are to be found recorded among their archives. A grant was made to the convent by the town (Adam Wallace of Newton, Provost, with consent of the Bailies and community) of "ane piece of land, with the seat and place of a mylne, and the cruives for fishing of salmon," by a charter dated 1st October, 1531, Reddendo, five shillings Scots. This grant was made from religious considerations, and has the town's seal appended to it. A property was bestowed on this establishment, of considerable value at the present day, viz., the

lands of Dalnkeith. This appears by a curious document among the town's records, termed "ane Testificat witnessing that a noble and worshipful man, umql. Allan Lauder, gave, in perpetual almonds, the lands of Dalnkeith to the friars preachers of Air, for the soul of umql. Allice Campbell, his wife, and for the souls of all his posteritie, for continual prayers of the friars, and for the anniversar of the said Allice, and that the same was honestlie and reverentlie done." This writing is dated the 4th May, 1411. The family of Craigie appear to have been considerable benefactors to this convent. A charter of mortification to it, anno 1399, by Margareta Stewart, Domina de Craigie, is found in the University of Glasgow, and among the conventical papers here there is a charter by Sir Hugh Wallace of Craigie, dated 9th February, 1397, granting annually to the friars four bolls of oatmeal, expressed "pro salute animæ mei, parentum meorum, successorum, et omnium fidelium defunctorum; vel, pro qualibet bolla, quadragenta denarios, usualis monetæ regni Scotiæ." The Scottish money at that time, as would appear from Ruddiman's preface to Anderson's Diplomata, was about 1s 8d sterling per boll. There is a confirmation of this charter by Sir John Wallace of Craigie, dated 5th August, 1480. There appears a deed of mortification by "Frater Michael Gray, generalis preceptor de sancto Anthonio, prope Leth, infra regum Scotiæ veneralibus viris religiosis, Priori et conventui Frtrum predicatorium de Are," of an acre of land, described as lying among his other lands in the croft of Ayr. Michael Gray appears to have belonged to St Anthony's Chapel, near Leith, or rather near Edinburgh, and to have been possessed of some property at Ayr, of which he was probably a native. Many other deeds appear conferring property on this monastery to a considerable extent. At the Reformation, the whole thereof was bestowed on the burgh of Ayr, by a charter of Queen Mary, for special purposes therein expressed, and which have been long ago fulfilled. A part of this property may be said to have been only restored to the burgh, from which the rapacious monks had originally obtained it. The names of many of the priors and sub-priors of the monastery are preserved. The earliest found among its records is Johannes de Torry, who was prior in 1358. Patricus de Carrick occurs as prior, anno 1401. Robert de Linlithgu in 1406. Finlous de Albania is styled "Custos de Conventu dormus Fratrum Predicatorum de Are," anno 1409. He was at the same time vicar-general of the Dominican order of Scotland. The names of a succession of priors and of one or two sub-priors, appear from this time till 1557, when John Leiche was prior, and John Rollic sub-prior, the convent then consisting of these and six friars, whose names are also preserved. This establishment was soon thereafter finally abolished, having existed above 300 years.

In a precuratory of resignation in favour of the burgh, dated 29th January, 1614, there is enumerated, among other property, "The lands, or place and stance of the black friar kirk, with the tenements of land houses, and orchyard, &c., founded within the precinct of the dyke formerlie possessed by the friars." It is somewhat surprising that the precise situation of the kirk, and the tenements of the convent, cannot at the present day be condescended on with any degree of accuracy. They were undoubtedly situated somewhere in the Lane or Vennel leading to the Mills. The pigeon-house of the convent had stood near to that path leading to the ford of the river, called the Dovecotford, and the convent must be presumed not to be far distant.

In the obituary of St. John's Church (fol. 7), William Parry leaves "Ad dispositionem chori de Are, septem rodas terræ inter molendinum et columbore fratrum predicatorum." In another obit. recorded (fol. 3), the annual payment for the anniversary is to be levied "de tribus curtis rodis terræ inter terras fratrum predicatorum, tendentes ad com-

munem viam supra molendinum de Are." From these records it may be inferred with certainty, that "the black friar kirk, tenement and orchards" were situated somewhere in the lane above-mentioned; and hence it has been by some conjectured that the building called Wallace Tower, the lower part of which only is ancient, formed a part of, or an appendage to, the monastery.

A monastery of the Franciscan order, or Grey Friars, was founded here by the inhabitants of the town anno 1472. Little mention is made of it by writers on religious houses. By one of them it is said that a statue of the Virgin Mary performed a number of miracles in it. Not the smallest notice is taken of it in any of the burgh records, at least, that has been discovered, except in one instance, which serves to determine its situation. In a community meeting held in 1652, to deliberate on which of two sites proposed for the new church, in place of that taken possession of by Cromwell, should be adapted, the meeting preferred that of the Grey-Friars, the other one proposed having been on Shewalton's ground, adjoining to it, on the south of the Grey Friars' convent. Not a trace now remains, except its well, issuing into the river, and which still retains the name of the Friars' Well.

These two Friaries seem to have been placed very near each other, notwithstanding that the tenets, or dogmata, of their monks were materially different.

About a mile to the south-west of the town stood a chapel dedicated to St. Leonard, of which, or of its monks, nothing now can be learned. Its ruins existed about the beginning of this century, but are now entirely effaced.

Amidst the gloom and superstition which these institutions had a tendency to inspire, there does not appear to have been wanting among the inhabitants some disposition to occasional amusement. A kind of frantic gambol, termed the Abbot of Unreason, which took place in many towns in Scotland, seems to have been practised. Mention is made of it in the Whitsunday Court of Alloway, held at Ayr, the 26th May, 1486, in which James Leche is said to have performed the part of Abbot. The writing is indistinct, that nothing more can be learned about it. This kind of amusement consisted in levelling all ranks and distinctions, and in holding up to ridicule the Abbots and other Clergy, a liberty which it may be thought could not be taken with impunity. This game was generally performed about Christmas, and seemed to resemble the saturnalia of the Romans. Exercises of every kind were introduced into it, till at last it was found necessary to prohibit its performance by act of Parliament. Other entertainments of a less offensive kind, were afforded to the inhabitants, and seem to have been patronised by the Magistrates and Council. The two following transcripts from the records, may, on this account be deemed curious: "Curia Burgi de Are, &c., 18th Nov., 1549. Quo die William Wallace in Quhitehouse referrit to the inquest, to enter to the freedom of Burgesrie for his labours done the time that he was Robert Hoode." "Dec. 2nd., 1549. Quo die, Johanes Campble, senior, factus fuit Burgensis gratis, pro suis laboribus tempore quo ipse fuit le littil Johne, una cum juravit fidelitatem supremae domine nostrae regine, et communitate, &c." What was the nature of the performances of these two persons thus rewarded, it is now difficult to ascertain, or whether Little John and Robert Hood, were characters in the same drama.

Though persons of such inferior note have been admitted as Burgesses, the privilege was not deemed of small importance by those in the higher ranks of life, by whom it appears to have been frequently solicited.

About this time a Burgess was admitted at the request of the Regent, the Earl of Arran, and others at that of the Archbishop of St.

Andrew's, and of Lord James Commendator of Kelso, &c., as is proved by the Council Records, in which are entries of many other noblemen and gentlemen of the first class, entered as Burgesses of the Royal Burgh of Ayr.

FRIARS CHURCH.

In the year 1230, or prior to that period, a Dominican monastery was founded on the water of Ayr, close by the town, supposed by William, Bishop of St. Andrew's. There is now no memorial of its existence, but a Fountain called the Friar's Well, which runs through the Church-yard into the river. Upon the site of this Monastery the present "Old Church" was built by Oliver Cromwell, as a compensation to the inhabitants for the loss of Saint John's Church. As recently as 1850 a writer was able to write as follows:—The Old Church is very plain but is curious and interesting on account of its still containing the same identical seats and galleries with which it was originally fitted up, and is still in excellent condition. Since that time, however, great changes have been made—the whole building has been entirely renovated and seated anew. Mr Gairdner of Dalblair has presented a fine organ to the church, and the alterations then made cost in addition upwards of £2000; and, while it is still the Auld Kirk, it is also one of the finest modernised churches in Scotland.

CITADEL OR BURGH OF BARONY OF MONTGOMERIESTON.

In 1652, Oliver Cromwell finding the ground around the church a proper situation for a Fort, took possession of it for that purpose, converting the church into an armoury, and compensating the burgh for the for the loss of it, by a sum of money, which was applied in the erection of a new one, on the site of a building formerly a Franciscan convent, being one of the four of such edifices planted by the Protector in Scotland. It was not pretended that he had obtained any written grant from the Burgh, nor was it supposed that he would give himself much trouble about the legality of an acquisition which he had a much shorter way of accomplishing. At the Restoration it was taken possession of by Charles II. and conferred upon the family of Eglinton. It was comprehended within the bounds of King William's charter, and consequently under the jurisdiction of the burgh, which right has since passed from them by prescription. Through the influence of the family of Eglinton, it is said that Charles II. granted warrant for a charter to Hugh 7th Earl, conveying "totum et integrum illud propugnaculum jacend prope Burgum nostrum de Ayr, communicater vocatum lie Citadel de Ayr, to be erected into a Burgh of Regality, which was resisted by the Magistrates and Town Council of Ayr, on the ground that it was contrary to all law and equity, considering that it would be the destruction and ruin of the ancient Burgh of Ayr, and whole inhabitants thereof, being so near the same, and built upon the very property and river wherein they stood very anciently infeft by the Kings of Scotland, never quarrelled by any, having their parish church enclosed within the walls thereof. The passing of which would breed such animosities between the two Burghs as would not be forgot for many generations, unless the right of property which the Burgh of Ayr had to the ground of the Citadel, were taken away by law."

Of this venerable structure nothing now remains but its tower, to which the west end of it is conjoined. The Tower was finished at the top with two gables, of a triangular form. But, in 1778, it was thought proper to remove these (though equally firm and durable with any part of the building) and to erect a parapet in place of them, with turrets at each corner. This was done to modernise its appearance, and the expense defrayed by the Saint John's Lodge of Freemasons here, who have thus rudely altered its ancient form, seem to have had but little veneration for Saint John, the tutelar Saint of the Fraternity.

Sixty or seventy years after this a still greater change was made in the appearance and surroundings of Montgomeriston. The Fort Green, as it was familiarly called at that time, was purchased by Mr Millar, who had a feuing plan prepared, and built a fine addition to the old Castle, or St. John's Tower, completely modernising the whole place. The purchase was made from the Marquis of Ailsa, who had come into possession of the Barony by the excambing of a piece of land with the Earl of Eglinton in lieu of it. It had remained in the hands of the Earls of Cassillis for many years, and it is to be regretted that the Marquis of Ailsa had not been more intimately associated with the County Town, or it might have been gifted to it as a public park. No reflection, however, can be cast on the Marquis for this, for if there were not sufficient public spirit in the Burgh to acquire it for the use of the inhabitants, or even to approach his Lordship and endeavour to acquire it on moderate terms, it was not to be expected that a nobleman living at some distance from the Burgh should think of gifting it, where to all appearance it would not have been appreciated. The Municipal rulers of Ayr are blamed for parting with their lands centuries ago for an old song, but several times within the present century they have had the chance of repurchasing them instead of the private individuals who have made a good thing of it. At all events, the Citadel would have been an excellent and valuable addition to the property of the burgh had the Town Council availed themselves of the opportunity to purchase it when it came into the market; no doubt, like many others, they saw their error when it was too late to be mended.

The history of the stones which were used to build the fortifications of Ayr Citadel, could it be related in all its minutæ, would furnish an excellent chapter in any romance. A short outline of a few of their adventures may not be uninteresting to the readers of the present volume. Before the Commonwealth they had, as a portion of Ardrossan Castle, braved many a storm, seen many a scene, and could, had they had tongues, have told many a tale of rapine, woe, and fight. They were next transferred to the Citadel of Ayr by the tough old independent who cared neither for king, noble, nor people. His own will was his law, and doubtless in the west as well as in the east of Scotland he did as he chose, consulting with none. After they had served their time as a means of defence to Ayr, and had assisted in overawing the Royalists of the district, they were removed from the Fort by the authority of the Earl of Cassillis, and used to build the Ayr steeple. Even here they were not allowed to rest. After they had served the purpose in the steeple, and had seen many a summer sun, and braved many a winter storm, they were removed when the steeple was taken down, and used to enclose the grounds of Blackburn House. Well may they exclaim—"to what base uses have we come at last." Four times have they been bedded in lime, and on three of these occasions they were placed in rather remarkable and conspicuous positions.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the town of Ayr occupied a prominent place in the national history, both in the war of independence and throughout the religious struggle in later times. The

early career of Wallace is inseparably connected with it, and John Welsh was minister of Ayr in 1604. The principles of the Reformation were warmly appreciated by the citizens, and some of the martyrs are entombed in the "Auld Kirkyard." When moderate views crept into the Church of Scotland, several ministers of the west were caught by the infection, and heresy in Ayrshire may be said to have reached its climax when the Rev. Dr. M'Gill, one of the ministers of Ayr, published, in 1876, his "Essay on the Death of Christ." The Doctor's views were attacked right and left, but it was not till his friend and neighbour, Dr. William Peebles of the Newton, in a centenary sermon in 1788, denounced the sermon as heretical, that he was provoked to reply. It is in reference to this affair that Burns, in "The Kirk's Alarm," says—

Poet Willie, Poet Willie,
Gi'e the Doctor a volley
Wi' your 'liberty's chain' and your wit," &c.

Dr. M'Gill lies interred in Ayr Churchyard.

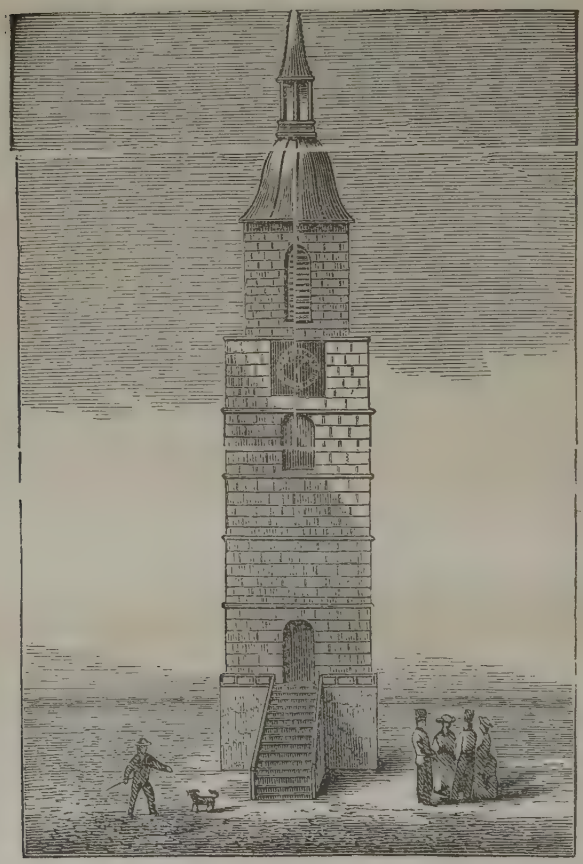
The Rev. Dr. Dalrymple was the colleague of Dr. M'Gill, and suspected of entertaining similar opinions. It is of this gentleman that Burns says:—

"D'rymple mild, D'rymple mild,
Tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye,
Auld Satan must leave ye,
For preaching that three's ane ann twa."

It is a curious fact that John Murdoch, to whom Burns is said to have owed so much as his early tutor, was dismissed from the office of teacher of the burgh school of Ayr, for reviling the reverend gentleman. Murdoch was appointed one of the English schoolmasters of the burgh, 4th November, 1772, and a petition having been laid before the magistrates, by James Neill, procurator-fiscal, he was dismissed from the office, 14th February, 1776. The complaint against Murdoch was that he did, "particularly within the house of Mrs Tenant, innkeeper in Ayr, as well as in the house of Patrick Auld, weaver in Ayr, utter the following, or such like unworthy, base, reproachful, and wicked expressions, viz., that he, Dr. William Dalrymple, was as revengeful as hell, and as false as the devil; and that he was a liar, or a damned liar; that he, the said John Murdoch, also called Dr. Dalrymple a hypocrite, or accused him of hypocrisy." The magistrates declared Murdoch to be unworthy the office he held, and did "unanimously dismiss him from the said office accordingly, and find him incapable of teaching, either publicly or privately, within the burgh and parish of Ayr, in all time coming."

The teacher and his pupil seemed to have entertained different opinions as to the Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, but the probability is that Murdoch had spoken unguardedly, and in a moment of irritation. "Dalrymple mild" was universally esteemed. He was a native of Ayr, and at his death, in 1814, had been sixty-eight years minister of the first charge.

THE OLD JAIL.



The Old Jail, with its steeple and the Dungeon Clock, was the first object that attracted the attention of travellers in crossing the New Bridge, as will be seen in the woodcut representing Ayr in 1800. Built, as already stated, by the old stones from St. John's, it was a fair specimen of the prison of the olden time. It stood in the centre of Sandgate Street, in front of the entrance of what is now called Academy Street, then known as the "Schule Vennel." It stood with its front towards the New Bridge, and extended backwards about 30 yards, so that the space on either side was very limited and afforded very little space for traffic. Perhaps the best description of the building is to be had from "A Report of the Prison of Ayr," printed about the commencement of the century, which we give in full:—

The Prison of Air consists of the Steeple and the lower gaol under the Court house; the former was built between the years 1722 and 1726, and the latter in 1755 and 1756.

This Prison was visited by Mr Howard, in the summer of 1779. He describes it, "like most of the Prisons in Scotland, an old building, dirty and offensive, without Courts, and without water; not visited by the County Magistrates, and in which the gaoler was allowed the sale of the most pernicious liquors." He adds, "there are but few prisoners, and from the first day of January, 1768, to the first of July, 1779, there has been only one Execution, which took place in this last mentioned year, and was for robbery, combined with murder." He commends the short delay which took place after the conviction and sentence; and "asserts, that such a delay is equally injurious to the Criminal, and to Society; because, as is stated in the Act of King William, 1695, the punishment of the offender ought in every instance to be made to appear the immediate consequence of his crime."

This Prison was inspected by Mr Neild of Buckinghamshire, in 1809, who declared it one of the best old Scotch prisons; but strongly recommended that every part of it should be carefully scraped and whitewashed twice every year. He blamed the Magistrates of Air for not supplying the prisoners with blankets, and a variety of little necessaries. He caused a large leaden cistern for holding water, to be erected at his own expense, in the Debtor's Room, sent a supply of blankets for the whole prison, and left a sum of money for the purchase of the other articles which he had pointed out as deficient.

In consequence of a late Act of Parliament, the Depute Advocate for the Crown inspects the Prison of Air at every Circuit, and reports to the Judges. Of the nature of these Reports, your present Reporter has had no opportunity of being informed; but he has ascertained that the inspections have hitherto been extremely slight and cursory, never occupying longer than a few minutes.

The present Gaoler of Air Prison is William Paul, who has held the office for above eight years, and is a sober, honest, active and humane man. He gave bond for 500l. with two sureties, for the faithful execution of his office, on entering on it, and up to this day there has been no complaint against his conduct in any respect. Your Reporter strictly questioned all the Prisoners apart, and could discover nothing but what was highly meritorious on the part of the Gaoler. His salary is fifty pounds a year, thirty-five being paid by the Town of Air, and fifteen by the County. He has no right nor claim to fees of any description, either from Debtors or Criminals, but he acknowledged to the Reporter that he sometimes received presents, which, however, he declared were trifling. He admitted also, that he frequently supplied his prisoners with Porter or Beer, but never with Wine or Spirits. The Court will determine whether they judge any Regulation necessary to be adopted in regard to this matter, which often leads to great abuses in Gaols. In the practice of the Air Prison, the Gaoler never receives the Warrant of Commitment. It is always left with the Town Clerk, from whom the Prisoner or his Agent obtains the double of it, as ordered by the Act, 1701. This is not strictly according to the letter of this important Act, but no harm seems likely to arise from the deviation. It is much to be regretted that the Gaoler does not reside in the Gaol, but the present building renders that impossible.

The present Prisoners are, three Debtors,

One Criminal under sentence of imprisonment for twelve months, for horse-stealing,

And one accused of theft.

One of the debtors is paid sixpence a day by his Creditors; the second receives eightpence; and the third, a shilling a day, by order of the Magistrates of Air. With these sums they have to provide themselves in food, bedding, firing, and every necessary. They all complained bitterly of the smallness of their allowances. They are sup-

plied with water twice every day, in any quantity they choose. At present there are no female Debtors in the Gaol; but when there are any, they are confined night and day in the same room with the men. The present Gaoler has never had more than two female Debtors in custody at one time. He has often had fifteen or sixteen males. The wives and children of Debtors are admitted to visit them in the day time, and sometimes are permitted by the Gaoler to remain all night. The wives and children of Criminals are admitted to visit them at Gaol hours only, and for a short time. They are never allowed to remain all night. The men and women Criminals are always kept in separate Cells. Fourpence a day only is allowed to each Criminal for his support.

The only claim that in the least approaches to the cruel custom in the English Gaols, called Garnish, Footing, or Chummage, is a demand now established as a rule among the Debtors, that every new prisoner shall pay down two shillings; one of which is laid out in purchasing Coals, and the other in Porter or Beer.

Divine Service is never performed in this Gaol, in any form whatever, unless at the request of a person under sentence of Death; nor do the Clergy of this Town ever visit either Debtors or Criminals, unless upon a special application by them, which happens very seldom.

No Surgeon or Apothecary is appointed to visit the Gaol. When sickness occurs, the Gaoler requests the attendance of any of the Surgeons in Town that the Prisoner chooses to attend him.

Lunatics are frequently confined in this Gaol, even for years together. One insane person, of the name of Hunter, was kept here for above nineteen years, and is still confined in Wallace Tower. It is much to be wished that the late erection of an Asylum for Lunatics in Glasgow may put an end to the practice of confining such unfortunate people in this and other Gaols. The noise and uproar which Lunatics always occasion, cause much distress to all the other prisoners in the Gaol of Air, and are even a great annoyance to the neighbouring families. They have all complained of it to your Reports, and the Gaoler very heartily joins in the complaint. It is therefore hoped, that this Court will take proper measures to put an end to it. A strong additional reason for this is, that Lunatics are confined in prison merely to prevent them from doing mischief; they are never regularly attended by Medical people, and are therefore deprived of their chance of recovery from proper treatment.

The Gaol fever has not occurred in this prison for many years. This arises partly from the small number of persons confined together, but chiefly from the uncommonly complete Ventilation of the prison, which proceeds from the open wickets or slits in all the Cells and Rooms being made directly opposite to each other, by which a thorough current of fresh air is constantly passing across all the different apartments.

Gaming, by means of Cards, Dice and Backgammon, is occasionally practised by the Debtors in Air Prison. This ought certainly to be suppressed, as besides the indecency of people playing for money, who ought to have surrendered all their property to their Creditors, it must frequently give occasion to brawling, quarrelling, and even fighting.

The prisoners in Air Gaol are never wantonly put in Irons at the mere caprice of the Gaoler. This measure is never resorted to, but when prisoners have grossly misconducted themselves, have been outrageous and violent, or have attempted to break prison.

The only Fees payable by Prisoners in the Gaol of Air are, one shilling to the Town Officers, and sevenpence to the Town Clerk, by each Debtor, on being committed, and sevenpence to the Town Clerk on being liberated. These fees, trifling as they are, ought not to be permitted. They are evidently illegal, for all Royal Boroughs are

obliged by their Set or Constitution to keep a free Gaol, and are not entitled to exact fees from prisoners, whether confined for Debt or upon a Criminal Warrant. Indeed, I find that a person of the name of M'Whinnie, had brought an action against the Magistrates of Air, for extorting fees from him, and on the 7th December, 1803, the Court of Session pronounced a judgment to the effect above stated.

All the apartments in the Air Gaol are now cleansed and white-washed twice a year, immediately preceding the Spring and Autumn Assizes. This operation has been lately performed in the most complete manner, under the inspection of the present Provost, William Cowan, Esq., who has far exceeded all his predecessors in Office, in attention to the Police of the Burgh, and in particular has brought the Prison into a state of cleanness, and good repair, formerly unknown. But while this commendable improvement has taken place in the Prison, it is necessary to observe, that the persons of the Prisoners are dirty and offensive to the last degree. One of them was covered with vermin, and had had no change of clothing for near twelve months. All of them were evidently negligent in washing and shifting themselves; and it did not seem to be any part of the duty of the Gaoler, to oblige them to pay attention to those circumstances, which are so essential to the health and comfort, both of their neighbours and themselves. One principal reason of this great defect is the want of Prison dresses, such as are supplied to the unfortunate inhabitants of Gaols in England. As such people are generally unable to provide themselves with suitable changes of linen and other clothes, coarse and cheap dresses ought to be provided for them, and ought to be washed and cleaned as often as may be necessary, at the public expense. Their own clothes ought to be taken from them the moment they enter the Prison, and should be washed or scoured, or put for a few hours into an Oven, properly heated, so as to destroy all vermin and infection. The Criminals ought to be dressed in their own clothes when they are brought up for trial, that they may be more easily identified by witnesses; but except on that occasion they ought always to wear the Prison dress until they are liberated. It is evident that this must have a great effect in preventing escapes, as well as in promoting health and comfort. The Air Gaol should also be provided with a large Slipper Bath, which may be used either with cold or warm water, and would be of great service to the prisoners, both in preserving their healths, and in relieving many severe diseases. The Act 14th George III. expressly orders that hot and cold baths be provided for every prison.

The Prisoners in Air Gaol sleep upon straw, thrown upon the stone pavement. Till lately this straw was very seldom renewed, sometimes not even for years. But now the Gaoler has received orders to supply fresh straw as often as he finds it necessary, and his humanity induces him not to neglect this duty. A small sum would purchase coarse Canvas bags, into which the straw might be thrust; and the Prison might be furnished with cast iron bedsteads, such as are used in the English Hospitals and Gaols, at a very trifling expense. It may be objected to this latter proposal that the prisoners may contrive to take the bedsteads to pieces, and employ them in breaking prison. But if the walls and floors are kept as clean and as well white-washed as they ought to be, the very commencement of prison breaking must at once be evident to the Gaoler and Turnkeys; and certainly the fear of this has not prevented the universal adoption of iron bedsteads in England.

The Prisoners in Air Gaol never had any blankets or coverlets, till the humanity and generosity of Mr Neild furnished them to the

poor starving wretches, about two years ago. Till that period all the prisoners lay on straw without undressing, even for months or years.

The Prisoners are never allowed to employ themselves in any kind of work in the Gaol, from an apprehension that the necessary implements might furnish them with the means of escape. This is certainly not applicable to a great many employments in which prisoners may be usefully and commendably engaged; such as weaving net and other fabrics, making of baskets and toys, spinning, or preparing the materials for spinning, and many similar occupations. These would cheer the tedious hours of confinement, tend to preserve their health, and even improve their morals. The English Act, 19th Car. IId. c. 4th, and the British Acts, 12th Geo. IId. c. 29th, and 31st Geo. IIId. c. 46, ordain, "That the Justices in their Quarter Sessions provide a stock "of such materials as they find convenient for setting Poor Prisoners "to work, and may pay out of the County rate, fit persons to oversee "such Prisoners set to work." This humane system ought certainly to be adopted in the Gaol of Air. The Prisoners ought to be allowed their own earnings as an encouragement to them to work, and even small rewards might be given to such as excel in particular species of work. As a Gaol is in most cases intended for Custody and not for Punishment, and the confinement alone is severely afflicting, it becomes the especial duty of the County Magistrates to render the condition of the miserable inmates as tolerable as possible. This is chiefly to be effected by strict attention to cleanliness in the Apartments and Persons of the Prisoners, to the admission of pure air, and in winter supplying a due regard of heat; and lastly, by furnishing suitable employment, which is the best recreation of which their situation can admit. The 31st Geo. IIId. c. 46, orders, "That Justices "at every Quarter Sessions shall appoint two of their number, who "shall personally inspect the Gaol, at least three times in each Quarter "of a year: And if such Visitors shall observe or be informed of any "extraordinary diligence or merit in any Offender, they shall report "the same to the Judges, at the next Assizes, who may recommend "such offender to the Royal Mercy; and if his Majesty shall shorten "the time of confinement of such Offender, he is then to receive "necessary clothing, and such sum for his immediate subsistence as "the said Visiting Justices shall think proper, not exceeding twenty "shillings, nor less than five shillings." Surely this is worthy of imitation in this country, where hitherto the safe custody of prisoners seems alone to have been attended to, without any regard to the more important object of their Reformation.

"Parum est coercere Improbos Pœna,
Nisi Probos efficias Disciplina."

These Lines are on the front of the Hospital of San Michele, at Rome. Your Reporter humbly proposes that they shall be inscribed on the Entrance to the Air Prison, as an excellent Memento both to Judges and Justices in all time coming

Your Reporter cannot conclude this part of his subject without observing, that there are many valuable British Statutes relating to Gaols, which ought to be extended to Scotland. Most of them were the fruits of the travels, writings, and remonstrances of the immortal Howard. His benevolent mind, far from limiting them to England, or even the British Empire, certainly intended them for the whole human race. Yet they do not extend even to the Northern part of the Island of Britain; in regard to which the revered Howard may still be said to have travelled and written in vain. The following is an enumeration of the Acts alluded to:—12th Geo. II. c. 29.—10th

and 11th Will. c. 19 Sect. 1st and 2d.—24th Geo. III. c. 24.—24th Geo. III. c. 54.—31st Geo. III. c. 46.—32nd Geo. III. c. 28.—13th Geo. III. c. 58.—14th Geo. III. c. 20.—14th Geo. III. c. 59.—32nd Geo. III. c. 45. All these Laws ought to be extended to Scotland mutatis mustandis; or a general Statute might be framed from them for this part of the United Kingdom.

Particular Examination of the Prison of Air.

The Entry into the Lower Gaol is by a Passage 23 feet long by 4 wide and 10 feet high. This is lighted by two slits in the wall, 4 feet long, and 4 inches wide at the outside, but gradually widening to a foot within. There are two arched cells on the right hand as you go through this Passage, each 13 feet long by 10 feet broad, and 8 feet hight in the centre. Both of these Cells, as well as the Passage, have been lately white-washed. In a corner of each Cell lay some clean straw, which the Gaoler said he had the discretionary power to change as often as he might think necessary. Upon the straw lay the Blankets and Coverlet, given by Neild. These had not been washed since last summer. The Reported gave orders that they should be washed immediately, and that this should be repeated upon each change of inhabitant of the Cell. Each of these Cells is lighted by one open slit in the wall, of the same dimensions with those that light the Passage. The slits in the Cell are exactly opposite to those in the Passage, so that when the iron doors of the Cells are opened, a most complete and thorough Ventilation takes place through the Cells. The Cells are of strong mason work, and secured with massive iron doors, so that they seem quite complete as to security against Escapes. The aspect of these Cells is North-West, and during the Winter and Spring months the cold in them is intense. To alleviate this, the wretched inhabitants are induced to strip themselves in part, that they may stuff up the open slits with their clothes, and the straw from their bedding, thereby remaining almost in total darkness.

It is said that some years ago, when the Winters were more severe than they have been of late, Prisoners confined in these Cells lost their toes, and were affected with Gangrene in their feet and legs, in consequence of the severity of the cold.

Your Reporter suggests that the slits might be shut by sliding frames of tin filled with glass, which could be opened more or less as seemed proper; and that small iron grates, with a cast iron pipe passing out by a circular opening at the top of each slit, would admit of a comfortable warmth being produced in these miserable abodes during intensely cold weather. Prisoners are generally confined in these Cells for several months before they are brought to trial. During all this period the Law of the country holds them to be innocent; they ought not, therefore, to be subjected to the torture of such extreme cold. But the Law also forbids the application of torture even to convicted felons. It is no part of their sentence, and they ought not to be subjected to this species of it in Air Gaol, while waiting for an opportunity to be sent abroad for transportation, which they often do for months, and even years!

At the end of the Passage is the Debtor's Room, nineteen feet long by twelve and a half wide, and ten feet high. It is lighted by two opposite glazed windows, five feet wide by four in height, which open fully; being secured on the outside by a strong iron barricade. Pure air is thus freely admitted into this apartment. On the floor there are two standing beds, and a box-bed which folds up. Above the two standing beds are two other beds, forming a second tier. All these beds are six feet long and four feet wide. There is a large fire place

which never smokes. At the end of the standing beds there is a closet which serves as a Necessary. It is extremely offensive, indeed a dreadful nuisance; yet the Gaoler declares, that the two tubs which it contains, are removed every day, emptied, and carefully washed out. This can be remedied only by constructing a proper water-closet, which might easily be made to communicate with the underground drain, lately formed by Mr Hugh Cowan, the present Dean of Guild.

The Stair-case leading to the Steeple is only three feet and a half wide, and is in much need of repair. The walls are cracked, and the rough stones are without plaster. The Prison in the Steeple consists of four apartments, two on the first floor, and two above. The first of the lowersome rooms is sixteen feet long and eight wide, and eleven feet high. Each of these rooms are lighted by a slit in the wall, of the same dimensions as have been already described. These rooms contained fresh straw, had been lately white-washed, and were perfectly free from any offensive smell. The floors are of stone, the walls well plastered, but the ceilings are of wood: they have no chimneys, and of course cannot be properly warmed, unless by adopting some expedient similar to that suggested in regard to the Cells below.

The first of the upper rooms is twelve feet long and eleven feet wide, and at least sixteen feet high. It is lighted by a window three feet high and two feet and a half wide, with iron bars and a wooden shutter, but without glass. A sashed window with glass seems nothing more than what common humanity would point out for the poor wretches confined here during the winter season. Adjoining to this room is a closet, five feet long and three feet wide. The second of the upper rooms is twelve feet long by ten feet and a half wide, and at least sixteen feet high. It is lighted by an open slit in the wall, three feet high and three inches wide. This room has also a closet adjoining it, four feet long by three wide: both the floors and ceilings of the upper rooms are of wood; on which account, although they have no chimneys, it would not be expedient to attempt to warm them in a manner proposed for the cells and rooms below. They ought to be used only in the Summer and Autumn months, when a sashed and glazed window for the one, and sliding tin frames, containing glass, for the other, would sufficiently exclude the cold.

In the last mentioned room was confined William Gillespie, an Irishman, about seventy years of age, who was suffering a year's imprisonment by sentence of the Court of Justiciary, having been convicted of horse-stealing, and saved from a capital punishment by an appearance of fatuity.—His apartment was sufficiently clean and well aired, but his person was filthy in the extreme, having had no change of clothing since the commencement of his confinement, now about eleven months. He exhibited a striking example of the necessity of providing Prison Dresses, as already recommended: on being questioned as to his sufferings, he complained bitterly of the cold which he had endured during the Winter and Spring months, and most particularly of the cruelty of not employing him in some sort of work, as he had never been taught to read.

Hugh Ross, confined in the Gaol of Air, on suspicion of stealing a Box, containing a large sum in Bank notes, from a Carrier's cart at Ballantrae, has run his letters, that is, he has applied to the Court of Justiciary to issue Letters or Precepts, intimating to his Majesty's advocate to fix a diet for his trial within sixty days, in conformity to the Act of William, Parl. 1st. anno 1701, c. 6. Your Reporter feels anxious to call the attention of the Magistrates of Airshire, and of all his fellow countrymen, to the present state of the law and practice, in regard to this most important of all Acts, the great security of our personal liberties. The intimation to the Prosecutor in the words of

the Act is, "to fix a diet for the trial within sixty days after the intimation." Now, for seventy-five years after the passing of this Act, all the trials in Scotland which were brought on in conformity to it, were begun within the sixty days, a notice only is served upon the prisoner within the sixty days, naming a day for the trial at a period generally far beyond the sixty days. This construction of the Statute seems contrary to the grammatical meaning of the words; but even admitting that these were equivocal, as every penal statute ought to be interpreted in favour of the Prisoner, and most of all that great and important Statute which is meant to guard him against wrongous imprisonment and undue delay in bringing to trial, no hostile explanation ought for a moment to be admitted. But further, if doubts existed in regard to the meaning of a Law, surely the construction put upon it by the original framers, and the practice followed by them must be the best mode of resolving those doubts, especially when such construction and such practice entirely coincide with the obvious and declared intention of the Law. Now your Reporter is convinced that he can show that the understanding of this Act, and the practice followed upon it by Sir James Stewart, who was Lord Advocate in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, is opposed to the modern understanding and practice. In proof of this he appeals to the cases of the Craigs in 1703, of John Cameron in 1713, and particularly to the case of Mr James Dundas younger of Arniston, accused of Leasing-making in 1712, as detailed in Burnett's Treatise on the Criminal Law. In fact, this new construction of the Act seems contrary to the uniform tenor of all the proceedings in the Courts of Scotland, for three-fourths of a century after it passed. It is of the very highest importance to correct this error, as it would render the Statute almost nugatory against delays in trials; and thus open a door for a renewal of one of those very acts of oppression, on account of which the Estates of Scotland declared, that King James VII. had forfeited his right to the throne; which they expressly demand to have redressed in the Claim of Rights, on bestowing the Crown on King William; and to guard against which, this very Act was passed. If under the existing Statute, a trial can be fixed ten days after the expiration of the sixty, it can as well be fixed ten years. Public indignation would, no doubt, prevent so atrocious an attempt; but no one will assert that this is a proper foundation on which the liberty of Scotsmen ought to rest.

In the practice of the Court of Justiciary, as exemplified at our Circuits, the day first fixed for the trial under the Act 1701, even when it is fixed far beyond the sixty days, is never the one on which the trial commences. The first Libel is never insisted on, and falls to the ground, but new Criminal Letters are raised under the subsequent clause of the Act, thus prolonging the imprisonment, till the trial can be brought on at the ensuing circuit.

The Reporter feels it his duty to submit that cruel acts of oppression sometimes occur in the Prison of Air, by committing poor wretches for further examination, and delaying that examination for many days; thus denying them all the benefits intended by the Act 1701, which only applies to those in custody in order for trial. The only remedy, an action at Common Law, from the expense attending it, is usually out of the reach of such unhappy sufferers.

Your Reporter cannot refrain from stating his opinion, that the modern practice of deserting the diet pro loco et tempore, and recommitting persons accused on a new warrant, from Circuit to Circuit, is contrary to the spirit, though not to the letter of the Act 1701, against wrongous imprisonment, and undue delay in bringing to trial. From different instances that have occurred in this place, he holds it to be

a grievance of such magnitude as to call for Parliamentary interference and remedy.

Your Reporter must further remark, that on different occasions application has been made to Parliament to increase the sums required by this Act for Bail. Thus by the Act 11th Geo. I. cap. 26, the Magistrates are empowered to double the Bail here stated for the four classes of persons described; and by the 39th Geo. III. cap. 49, the sums for Bail are still further extended, so as now to amount to £1200 sterling for a nobleman, £600 for a landed gentleman, £300 for a burgess or householder, and £60 for any inferior person. But while this increase of the sums for Bail, mentioned in the former part of the Act, has been obtained, the sums for penalties or wrongous imprisonment contained in the latter part of the Act, remain unchanged since 1701, and are therefore comparatively nugatory. How strikingly different are these trifling pecuniary penalties in our Scotch Habeas Corpus, intended to guard us against the most dangerous engine of arbitrary power, from those contained in the English Act of Charles II. known by that designation. The penalties in the English Act are declared to be those of a Præmunire, which are forfeiture of lands and tenements, goods and chattels, and imprisonment during the King's pleasure; and it is further enacted, that whoever offends against this Act shall be incapable of receiving His Majesty's pardon; a wise provision, as the servants of the Crown are the most likely to be guilty of the offence.

Lastly, your Reporter has been informed that, of late years, the fees and charges consequent upon an accused person running his Letters, have been increased to the amount of from £30 to £40 sterling. This is, in effect, excluding a large proportion of the population of Scotland from all the benefits of the most valuable Act which was ever passed by her Parliament.

Your Reporter begs leave to conclude, by humbly suggesting the propriety of appointing a Committee of the most enlightened Magistrates of the County of Air, particularly of those who are Members of the Faculty of Advocates, to take into consideration the Act 1701, and the practice which, of late years, has followed upon it, and to report their opinion, whether time, the greatest of all innovators, has not rendered it necessary to apply to Parliament for a Declaratory Act, to explain and amend certain clauses in this, the most invaluable of all Laws that relate to Scotsmen.

Cum per se res mutentur in deterius, si Consilio in melius non mutentur, Quis finis erit Mali?—Bacon.

JAMES PATERSON, M.D.

Such is no doubt a faithful report of the Old Steeple, with its Dungeon Clock, which tolled in the ear of Burns, and the ancient jail and its nineteen steps; and readers can compare for themselves this structure with modern prisons and police cells. The venerable building was taken down in 1825 for the purpose of widening the street, and a new Steeple and Assembly Rooms erected in its place. A local Poet, certainly a wag, when its destruction was under consideration, presented and obtained an interlocutor on the following:—

PETITION OF THE STEEPLE, OF THE TOWN OF AYR, AND THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY.

Town of Ayr, Town of Ayr, hear my prayer hear my prayer,
And dinna pretend to be deaf,
I've cry'd till I'm wearit to get you to hear it,
And stop the impending mischief.

'Tis lang since ye promised, 'tis lang since ye promised,
To take down my tottering wa's,
Before that they fa' and crush great and sma',
In ruin's wide destroying jaws.

When first I was biggit completit and riggit
Sae snug in the midst o' the street,
Your forefathers a' then, allowed I was braw then,
And answer'd their purpose complete.

Their manners were simple, their manners were simple,
An' honesty sat on their brow,
All strangers to leaguing in lawless intriguing,
Their hearts were baith upright and true.

Greatwonder, greatwonder if ane in a hunder,
Had ere been brought in for a crime,
But oh! now how altered, their bairns now are halter'd,
By ane and by twa at a time.

My jail now, my jail now, is crazy and frail now,
An' scanty o' room to the boot;
'Tis packit owre fu' wi' the villainous crew,
Till they're ay now and then breakin' out.

Eglinton, Eglinton, about taking down,
I'm forc'd now to cry out to you,
Since Parliament's grantit, the boon that ye wantit,
O' settin' me up in the new.

I'm crakit, I'm rackit, my joints are a' slockit,
Oppressed wi' times levelling law;
Haste, haste, tak' me down or the best i' the town,
Yoursel' may be crush'd if I fa'.

For my Lord, for my Lord, you may weel ta' my word,
I fin my last hour fast approaching,
For Time's brought the summon that ruin is comin',
And on my strength daily encroaching.

My cock now, my cock now, ay views Ailsa rock,
And never minds how the winds bla',
His roost is sair shaken, a vera sure token,
The fabric maun vera soon fa'.

Now's the time, now's the time, to provide stane and lime,
When labourers wages are sma',
When workers are starving o' bread weil deserving,
Wi' no ae han's turn now ava'!

Your Lordship, your Lordship, may guess at the hardship,
Sustained by the poor i' this place.
Their want o' employment kills every enjoyment,
An' hunger still glours in their face.

Oh! I fear, Oh! I fear, gin the meal haud sae dear,
Great mis'ry poor bodies may fin.
And tho' usually leal they may break out an' steal,
'Tis need gaurs a naked man rin.

Do but think, do but think, how on mis'ry's brink,
They can look on their wee hungry weans,
They're wae for to see them, an naething to gie them,
The poor wee things canna eat stanes.

Then my Lord, then my Lord, your assistance afford,
An' get my wa's ta'en down wi' speed,
'Twill sweeten enjoyment and gie them employment,
And means o' providing their bread.

In hope now, in hope now, wi' frailty I'll hope now,
The few coming weeks I remain,
That larger ye'll mak' me and firmer compact me,
The warst o' the rogues to retain.

Believe me, believe me, some o' them wad grieve me,
In my present auld crazy state,
But if ance I were new, there will be unco few,
But the best o' their schemes, I'll defeat.

THE STEEPLE.

THE OLD WALLACE TOWER.

This venerable pile, of whose origin and early history few particulars can now be gleaned, is said to have derived its name from the renowned Sir William Wallace. No mention is made of it, we understand, in the records of the town, and the era of its construction is unknown. Judging, however, from its external appearance, the strength of the walls, and the obscurity of its history, it may be considered the production of a remote age. Ignorant, as we are, of its date and founder, it cannot be expected that we should pronounce, with certainty, on the end of which it was designed. Tradition says, that it was here that Wallace was confined by the English, and that it originally belonged to the family of Wallace. It certainly did belong originally to the Wallaces of Craigie, and from that circumstance, this tradition might have arisen, as some say that it was a kind of town's house for that family. This is not very probable, for it appears never to have contained any accommodation for that purpose, even in the dark ages of civilisation, as the accommodation contained, has never been more than two or three apartments. The family of Craigie at this time possessed a splendid castle about the distance of a gunshot from Ayr, and consequently did not require a house of such a description. This castle was only taken down about 100 years ago, and the garden walls are still to be seen. It appears, therefore, more probable, that its original was something belonging to the monastery, that stood between it and the river, and from its appearance, it is very probable that it had been used as a prison, or place of confinement, as the original appeared to have been two Cells, the one entering from the ground, or a few steps down, and the other from an outside stair, the original door to the second storey was an arch of the rudest and first construction formed of stones wrought to a kind of gothic curve, and set against each other. There appeared never to have been any inside stair in the building, as the staircase that was in it when taken down appeared to have been mostly cut out of the solid wall, in the internal angle of the building. There was no appearance of any window but narrow slits originally being in the building, as the openings or windows that were in it when taken down appeared all to have been slapped in at some alteration that it had undergone. The old building appears to have stood for a considerable time in a ruinous state before the top or Belfry that contained the clock and bells had been built upon it, as upon the top of the third storey a considerable quantity of vegetable mould was found between the old and new building, which gave every indication that for a considerable time on the top had been growing grass and herbage. The old top of the Tower or Belfry appeared to have stood for a great length of time, as the stones of which the walls were built, were very much wasted; the roof had been renewed at no distant period, and the whole had been kept for a considerable time in good repair, by rough-casting; but within this, the appearance of very great age was quite evident.

In the demolishing of the old building there was not the least trace of any record, or any thing that could lead to a discovery of the date in which the fabric was erected, or for what use it was originally built, and the whole will now for ever lie in the same obscurity.

The view here shown is the only original that now remains of the building taken down in 1832, from the actual measurement, while the building remained entire, and in this work it may be handed down to posterity, as an original of the ancient far-famed burgh of Ayr; famed for being long the favourite resort of the noble patriot and illustrious hero of which this old building bore the name, and like the hero is

now no more, and whatever this building formerly was, its last possessor was no less a distinguished person than the public Hangman!

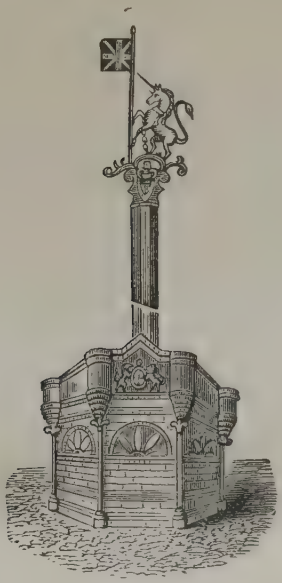
Like all other towns where Circuit Courts were held, Ayr had its salaried "finisher of the law." The hangman about the period referred to, had a free house in the "Auld Tower," where he lived alone. He had been a soldier, but most people considered him rather imbecile, of a timid and retiring disposition. Of course no one held communication with him, the very name of Hangman placing him beyond the pale of human society. He had therefore recourse to other companionships—and these were of the animal kind—mice, rats, and birds, several of whom he had so tamed that their gambols and music served to cheer the weary walks of his life. He talked a good deal to himself, especially in his solitary walks at night. He seemed to think that every man's hand was against him, seeking his life. He never bought bread twice from the same baker, lest he should be poisoned; and he brought his water from various springs in the neighbourhood, for the same reason. He was truly a character, and his name as the Hangman was familiar to every one, though few knew him personally.

On Saturday afternoon in 1824, he unfortunately broke through his usual habits of caution, and ventured down the High Street so far as to find himself within easy access of the harbour—then the great resort of promenaders. The barque Hercules of Ayr was discharging timber at the time. He went on board to witness the operation. A heavy log was just about to fall from the stern port-hole, and the cry of "let go" from the hold warned the crew to unship their handspikes—for at the time they were not attached to the capstan. The men succeeded in doing so, all save one, who, finding it impossible, cried to the bystanders on the deck, of whom there might have been half a dozen, to stand clear. With the recoil of the rope the capstan flew round violently, ejecting the handspike with great force. It struck the hangman on the side. The poor fellow neither spoke nor uttered a cry, but placing his hand on the spot, and turning up his eyes, with a dejected countenance, as if he were saying to himself, "Ah, I might have expected this," he walked away, evidently in great pain. He reached his solitary abode, but no one cared to follow him, uncertain whether they would be admitted.

Part of the Hangman's duty was to ring the bell of the "Wallace Tower," but when Sabbath came, no bell was heard to toll. Few were aware of what had happened, and as few thought of disturbing him in his solitary home. In fact, a kind of supernatural dread of the man, from his profession, seemed to animate almost every one. Monday passed—Tuesday passed—still no sound of the bell. All kinds of surmises were afloat as to the Hangman's neglect of duty; but at length the accident came to be talked of, and the Bailies causing the door of the Tower to be forced open, he was found dead upon his humble couch.

No official inquiry was made into the circumstance, but no doubt was entertained that the blow from the capstan was the cause of death. He was decently interred in the "Auld Kirkyard"—the last salaried official of the kind that Ayr is likely to require. A local rhymester, who might be a wag, but little of poet, gave vent to the following impromptu on the occasion:—

"The burglars now may loudly crow,
And doers of misdeed;
No more the bad ones he'll off-throw,
'Tis true—the Hangman's dead!"



THE MALT CROSS.

(Taken down in 1778.)

Some centuries ago there was erected at the extremity of the High Street, an elegant structure, in the form of a Hexagon, of which is here given an accurate drawing, and was similar to that of Edinburgh. The building stood at the place called the Malt Cross, and was seen in four different directions. It had been rebuilt about the time of Charles II. Coins of that reign having been found. A former one appears from some of the monkish records, to have been at the same place, at a very early period. At this place, as will be seen afterwards, was the scene and tragic finale of Maggie Osborne—a place of general rendezvous for loungers of all descriptions, the place too where all proclamations, interdictions and proceedings were executed, and it remained until the building of the New Bridge in 1778, for which the town of Ayr was indebted to the patriotic exertions of Provost Ballantine, whose name will long be remembered in the annals of the town. The Cross was then taken down, though an old friend not at all ripe for dissolution, but as considered rather a nuisance after the introduction of carriages.

MAGGIE OSBORNE.

The Cross of Ayr was witness to a scene, towards the end of the 16th century, the most appalling of any thing that ever disgraced the annals of our country. The execution of this fanatical tyranny can only be accounted for from the superstition of the times. The fact, however incredible, is authenticated in the records of the town. The tradition as handed down and retailed by a relative of the injured sufferer is as follows:—In the High Street of Ayr, opposite to the old Bank of Macadam & Co., now No. 77, lived a family of the name of Osborne. Miss Osborne, a young and beautiful girl, became heiress to the property on the death of her parents. It so happened that this girl was seized with what is now known as brain fever, and she at times showing symptoms of aberration of intellect, caused by the nature of the trouble, nothing would satisfy the venerable Mr Adair, the saviour of the town, but that she had connection or correspondence with the Devil! and that she must confess! The poor girl not wishing to confess any such acquaintanceship, became worse in her mind. To prison she was sent, till a confession was extorted either through torture or confinement. Here deprived of all society but Turnkeys and this fanatical confessor, Miss Osborne became still worse. After a deal of confinement, she showed symptoms of recovery, and immediately the all engrossing sound of confess—confess, thrilled through her ears. The poor girl, now torn down and emaciated by confinement, did confess that death would be preferable to a life of hopeless misery and confinement, and this, in the eyes of Mr Adair, amounted to a confession of guilty of the charge of Witchcraft, and she was sentenced to be burned at the Cross of Ayr. A pile was actually erected of wood, and she underwent her sentence, with calmness and resignation, amidst a weeping crowd of spectators. Maggie Osborne was buried near Saint John's Church, and a stone erected to her memory, which was still to be seen about the middle of the present century. She was the last who suffered for Witchcraft in Scotland.

GENERAL BROWN AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

The Kyle Union, the Asylum, and the Police, have removed from our midst, or at least from our streets, many who contributed much to the amusement of the lieges. Ayr during the first half of the century, had many "characters" going at large, who would now at the public expense be confined. There are differences of opinion as to whether such should be the case or not, it is enough for the purpose of the present publication that we give a few particulars as to the characters to whom we refer. The times, of course, must be taken into consideration.

Locomotion was not much in fashion. Parties belonging to the town who had been at London were considered to have "travelled," and seen something of the world. A respectable individual who walked to the "overgrown place," his purse being light perhaps, was, on his return, dubbed "Lunnun John," which sobriquet stuck to him through life. The society of those who had resided some time in Edinburgh and Glasgow was courted at tea parties; and the medical and law students in particular, proud at having been at the seats of learning,

used to entertain young ladies by describing what they had seen in these cities,—the big wigs, castle, fine streets, squares, monuments, the college, &c. The Medicals, with grave countenance, sometimes gave a hint that they could, if they dared, reveal something awful, but which, in their opinion, was absolutely necessary for public health and the progress of science. It was generally understood that they meant the doings of the Resurrectionists, well known, as supposed, to some of them, and the galvanising of the last murderer in the dissecting room. How the juveniles, too, used to stare, too, when told by their papas that they had seen the Lion on Arthur's Seat, Scotland's Crown at Edinburgh, and King William's Statue at the Cross of Glasgow.

But the "Railway" has changed the system of things, and may be said to have revolutionized society. What a saving of time and money; and who can estimate the moral benefits which have proceeded from the wheels of the fire chariot? All have shared in the advantages, and perhaps commercial travellers and farmers, who used regularly to visit market towns, as much as any other. The former were the chief patrons of the inns and coaches—fine fellows all, with plenty of money, and by no means in a hurry like the modern scarecrows of steam. A jolly Englishman would have thought nothing of postponding his journey, to the great contentment of Mrs Simpson of the Black Bull, till he ate up, dinner after dinner, her whole litter of ten pigs; and this, as Sam Slick would say, is a fact. Farmers too, (only distant an hour's drive by Railway) would sometimes spend a day on the road, corning their horse and watering themselves with inn-keepers and toll-keepers; and, if the naig required a "shoe on," with the smith as well. Arrived in town, a jovial nicht would be spent wi' an "auld acquaintance" in honest Mrs Brown's at the Fauld Backs, the next day at the fair (where every transaction generally began or ended with a gill), and the evening would certainly see some of them about the "wee short hour ayont the twal" careering home like Tam o' Shanter to meet their dames, who had been "nursing their wrath to keep it warm." Now, both classes, as the Americans say, go ahead—the traveller makes running calls, takes a chop at a dining-room, and bolts off with an express train; the farmer procures a return-ticket, buys or sells off hand, without a gill, and returns to his family in his right mind, perhaps with any cattle he has purchased in the same train.

But it were idle to attempt to describe the benefits which a single class has received in a social, economical, or moral point of view.

Several towns of note could not even boast of a public conveyance, but Ayr had its "Telegraph," one of the old four-in-had stage coaches to Glasgow; and, amidst the general dulness, one of our favourite amusements, apart from school, which by the way we considered no amusement at all, consisted in attending with all possible regularity its departure and arrival. Passengers could not walk quietly to a station, procure a ticket, and, amid the bustle, take a seat in a carriage scarcely observed. When a person had made up his mind to go per Telegraph, the first thing was to get himself booked for a certain day, because, had he not used this precaution, he might have found, when he came to the coach, that all the seats had been previously engaged. For this purpose a servant or messenger had frequently been sent to the hotel from which the coach started, and the common inquiry was whether "a' the ootsides were taen" or "a' the insides taen oot"; and, according to the answer, a seat was secured as required. A few knowing ones would quietly walk to the head of the Newton, and take their chance of a vacancy; but booking was the general custom.

Many articles of consumpt were dear, and taxation heavy (only think of 7d postage for a letter between Glasgow and Ayr), and accordingly it was customary for parties to acquaint their friends that they

intended to go to Glasgow or Edinburgh, and that they would be glad to take letters or small parcels. The proposed journey not only came to be thus known, but it got wings at the "Sandgate Well." The town was supplied with water only from public and private wells, and there was a great traffic at the Sandgate Well. What a nice job for the servants to go to the well! Nay, it was said that some servants would not accept of a situation unless they were engaged, among other duties, as the lass that "was tae gang for the water." Sandgate Well, in short, was a kind of rendezvous for lads to meet their sweethearts, and where the domestic affairs of family were discussed, while the servants were waiting in turn to get the stoups filled. The circumstance, therefore, of any party of note about to go by the Telegraph soon became generally known, and sometimes the particular business on which they were to be engaged, and when they were expected to return.

Those who had been in Glasgow or Edinburgh generally returned with something new, such as an addition to or change in their dress, and all was duly noted and commented on. A dashing jekeller, bearing a patriotic name, who went to Edinburgh occasionally to replenish his "plate," once took the advantage of his trip to get his hair dressed in Princess Street. Such an occurrence could not escape notice, and the news soon spread, after the first tea and card party the jeweller attended. Accordingly, whenever he was seen leaving by the Telegraph, the remark was current that Jeweller Wallace had gone to Edinburgh to get his hair cut.

One of the drivers of the coach was John Curle, who used to say that he had spent a "nicht wi' Burns" at a club in Tarbolton. John had a thorough contempt for "new fangled notions." He never could understand the Newtonian theory of the earth going round the sun. "How can that be," he used to say, "for I ha'e driven a coach for thirty years between Ayr and Kilmarnock, and the half-way house* aye stan's where it used to do!" He was at the same time an excellent specimen of his profession, and there was something of interest in his rubicund face, and that of his jocular and ancient comrade, Samuel Tam the guard.

Sol himself did not more punctually fulfil his mission than did these two worthies, and many a time it puzzled us how the human machine could be wound up to such regularity. And then the ever-changing nature of the biped load whom the daily rolled backward and forward between Ayr and "the great commercial emporium of the west," presented a rich opportunity for the study of character; and there was music in the words of old Tam—"All ready, John," as he sprang up to his seat behind, giving a tout or two upon his long white-iron horn, as well as in the "Go on, horses," and the flourish of the whip upon the part of the obedient John; and the sound of the horses' feet on the causeway, as they rounded the corner at the Malt Cross, and passed majestically along the New Bridge, and were soon lost to sight. Nor was the arrival of the Telegraph nightly from that mighty city, of which we had heard so much, but never seen, of less consequence. The crowd of idlers was generally much greater in the morning—some welcoming the arrival of friends, others, like ourselves, staring at the new-comers with a curiosity which, perhaps, could not be accounted for otherwise than by the logic of old Nabob Limond, when puzzled for a reason—"Hoo! just because just." There was a pleasure in the

* Near to Symington, about six miles from Kilmarnock, where John and Samuel used to sup a bowl of porridge and milk at eight a.m., previous to breakfasting in Kilmarnock at nine.

manner in which the long whip of the driver was laid aside, and the reins hung loosely over the harness, satisfied that the work of the day was about a close; and in the whisk of the tails of the tired horses, as unyoked, they thought of refreshing water, comfortable stalls, and abundance of corn and hay! And then, what a bustle Samuel was in, with his rosy face still more freshly blown, as, aided by his assistant porters, he handed down the luggage, and bowed so politely to the ladies, or thanked the gentlemen, with a touch of his broad brim. Finally, the coach stripped of all its furnishings, and the duties of the day over, there was delight in their retiring to the Queen's Head, to meet their joint friends, and enjoy the accustomed allowance of "brandy and water" before retiring, as the stereotyped phrase of the local paragraph writer has it, "to their several places of abode."

One autumn evening, as we stood opposite the Black Bull, waiting, among numerous other idlers, the arrival of the coach, a loud hurrah was raised and prolonged as the Telegraph wheeled round from the New Street, "General Brown has come to town!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried all the big and little boys, amidst the waving of hats and bonnets. We had never heard of General Brown before, although it was obvious he was no stranger to the good town of Ayr. The coach was more than usually crowded, and dust all over. Seated behind the driver we observed the cocked hat, feather, scarlet coat epaulettes, of the party saluted. As he came down slowly, and with much majesty, Samuel paid great apparent deference to his charge—"Take care, General, take care!" On terra firma, the General, to our young fancy, presented an extraordinary and rather incomprehensible appearance. He did not stand above five feet one, but was remarkably broad and strong—a perfect Samson in muscular power. His military coat, of the finest quality, but somewhat stained, flowed well down to his heels, and his body was begirt with the sword belts and trappings of a cavalry officer. On his breast he had various ornaments and medals, and from his hat streamed a brilliant assortment of ribbons; but his face struck us with an indescribable feeling of awe and wonder. We had recently been reading the adventures of Baron Munchasen, one of the old cheap editions, with a woodcut of the hero in grim outline, having a black patch on his disjointed nose. Not a few of our elderly readers may, perhaps, recollect the genuine portrait we allude to. What! thought we, this must be the veritable Baron himself—the same features; the only difference being that the one was a picture, this is a reality. There he stood, with his brown, weatherbeaten, iron face, fierce grey eyes, shaggy eye-brows, massive nose, knocked aside as if by an accident, and never properly replaced; his mouth, lips, and ponderous under jaws opening and shutting with a heavy, determined motion—in good keeping with the squinting ogle of his piercing gaze. His right hand leant upon a strong stick, for his left leg was some half-inch shorter than his right.

We were puzzled to think who this great man could be. We had heard of Wellington, Moore, Graham, Hope, Napoleon, and others, but never of General Brown. And he must have seen good service, too; that broken nose had been occasioned by the cut of a sabre, and that halt in his walk is the result of a spent cannon ball. Altogether, we felt an inexpressible interest in the extraordinary warlike character before us, the centre, as he was, of a crowd of onlookers. Like most Scots boys, we were deeply read in Wallace and Bruce, and regarded all who wore a sword as the embodiment of chivalry. Our fancy took wild flights, as it rapidly ran over in imagination the various passages of the hero's history.

"Guard!" cried the General, in an authoritative voice, "hand out my luggage."

"Yes, General, immediately," was the ready and obsequious reply.

Down came the General's luggage, lot after lot; and if we were astonished before, we were still more surprised now. First came a large bag or wallet, which could be slung over the shoulder, if necessary; next a flag or ensign, rolled upon a spear-like pole; then a white-iron horn, as long as that of the guard, and longer. In our simplicity we wondered what use a general could have for such paraphernalia.

"Now, guard, my despatches!"

"Here they are, General," said the ready Samuel, handing a bright, round, and rather large tin case to the mysterious man in uniform. "Despatches," thought we, "truly he must be a great personage!"

"Here, guard," added the General, "here is something for you," slipping a coin or two, apparently, into the hand of Samuel, who bowed his acknowledgments.

"Now," added the General, with manifest complacency, "tell the waiter I want to be shown to my apartments!"

"Yes, General," cried the waiter of the Bull, who was quite at hand, "come this way, they are all ready—in the stable!" which latter words he added in an undertone, and the meaning of which we did not understand at the time. The General then marched into the Bull, where the landlord was ready to receive him; and the crowd, giving three cheers, dispersed, as they would do upon witnessing the safe arrival and up-putting of any other great personage.

We went home without finding any one who could give us an intelligent account of General Brown, and we fell asleep dreaming of battles, Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Wallace, and many other heroes. Next morning we witnessed the departure of the Telegraph as usual, had breakfast afterwards, and was on our way from Newton Green to the school, when we heard the bells ringing, and saw a crowd passing, as it were in procession, along the new bridge. This was about nine o'clock. We hastened our steps, and found that the Lord Justice Clerk and another of the Judges, with the Magistrates and Councillors, were making a formal and imposing entry into the town to open the Justiciary Court. At the head of this procession were the staff of the militia, a small body of men in uniform, and, to our astonishment, who should be marching in front but General Brown, with all the grim pomp and circumstance of the previous evening! He was carrying the standard, still furled, over his shoulder, and his air was extremely military, the only mar to it being the shortness of his left leg, the defect of which he endeavoured to conceal as well as the weight of his body enabled him, by imposing an extra share of duty upon the other.

We thought it very strange that a General should condescend to act as captain of the Ayrshire Militia staff; but such was the fact, and our knowledge of military duty or etiquette was too limited to reason ourselves into or out of any belief on the subject. The Judges having been duly escorted to the Court House, the General and the staff returned, in the order they had gone, to the Malt Cross, where they presented arms to him, and were dismissed.

There could be no dubiety about all this. Perhaps the General, we thought, had come upon a special mission to attend the opening of the Justiciary Circuit—more especially as it might be considered an important one, two notable disturbers of the peace—Anderson and Glen—being to be tried for a Sabbath-day murder; and they were tried, condemned, and executed—both swinging upon the same tree. But we hurried to school—our lateness and abstraction as to the General subjecting us to what we conceived a rather unmerited severity of punishment.

Returning in the afternoon by the Sandgate, somewhat moppishly and late from the Academy, having been "kept in" for our morning's default, we were interrupted by a vast crowd, chiefly boys and grown-up lads, extending from the mouth of the "Courier" (now the "Observer") office close, up the High Street. Ever and anon they shouted, hurrahed, and shouted again, those nearest the close always keeping a vigilant look-out, as if danger lurked there. At length the crowd broke and fled in all directions; and, to our utter amazement, out rushed the General, flourishing his stick and shouting with stentorian lungs—"Charge, charge!" On he ran after the flying enemy with all the velocity his ponderous body, game leg, and a drop too much, permitted. He was evidently drunk, and so begrimed with snuff, that "his best friends," as the saying is, "would hardly have known him."

Two canny town officers, with scarlet coats, constituted all the force that was deemed necessary to keep the peace. So the fun, for it seemed greatly to amuse the inhabitants, was allowed to go on. Confounded at what we saw, but engrossed with the spectacle, we hovered on as a spectator. As charge after charge became expended, and the routed enemy was nowhere, the General, pouring with perspiration, and chuckling over the dispersed foe, invariably returned to his stronghold in the "Courier" office close, the coward crowd as invariably gathering in from all quarters in the rear, and again besieging him with renewed bravados. This species of warfare continued for some time, but it was evident that the General was getting gradually more uproarious, and less steady upon his legs. The last grand sally at length took place. On he came with increased energy, but evidently wild and unsteady, and his war-cry had merged into a thirsty croak. "On, Stanley, on!" however, was still his motto, the enemy flying before him. In the midst of the charge, one unlucky participant, presuming, perhaps, upon the General's declining powers, at all events, not getting out of the way quick enough, was brought to the ground by one fell swoop of his trusty oak. At the same time, tripping upon the prostrate body of his foe, the impetuous General came down, head foremost, with such force upon the causeway, that a shudder crept all over the spectators, everyone thinking he was killed. There he lay motionless, at some little distance in advance of his opponent, till the sympathetic crowd gathering round, both were borne away, the youth to his home, and the General to his apartments at the Black Bull. Happily neither of them had sustained material injury, and after the General had slept off his potations, he was next day enabled to resume his route, which we understood was to Dublin, to inspect the garrison there.

The mystery that had hung over our boyish fancy like a nightmare now stood revealed. The General was an eccentric, nay, more, a maniac! labouring under the delusion that he belonged to the army. Had he lived now he would have been confined in some of the many asylums for the insane, at Musselburgh or elsewhere. We never could learn precisely where he came from. Some said he belonged to Haddingtonshire. He had no doubt been an idiot from infancy, his insanity taking a military turn, and always attaching himself in his younger years to some regiment or other, though aspiring no higher than a soldier of the ranks. As years passed on his ambition increased, and he claimed, as we have seen, the position of General. Nor were there wanting military gentlemen who amused themselves with his weakness; and contributing their cast-off suits, equipped him in a style of highly-gratifying grandeur.

Edinburgh he, of course, considered the military headquarters of Scotland, and from thence all his movements were directed. What he

called his despatches were a number of finely executed documents, purporting to be his commissions, authorising his proceedings, signed by the reigning monarch, George IV., or the Commander-in-Chief, as the case required. And the owners of all stage-coaches and steamboats, and all post-masters, were enjoined to carry the General free, as he was on Government business. Hence his arrival by the Telegraph, and his reception at Ayr, as described. Most of the proprietors, guards, and coachmen entered heartily into the joke, and humoured the General, who was well respected, in so far as a person in his unhappy circumstances could be respected. He was by no means a furious maniac, unless excited by ill-treatment. On the other hand, he entertained rather extravagant notions of dignity, politeness, and chivalry. To shine as a knight-errant seemed to be part of his delusion. To aid those in distress, with money, if he had any coppers, or to defend them, if assailed by superior force, was to him the utmost glory; and, as we have said, he was powerful as a giant, no ordinary man could have grappled with him for a moment. The long horn which he carried by his side, when on foot, was to announce his entry into the towns and burghs as he passed along.

It was a curious fact in his aberration, that while fancying himself a General carrying Government despatches, it might be from the Commander-in-Chief in Scotland to the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, travelling by coach, and addressed and treated as a person of consequence by guard, coachee, waiter, and landlord, yet the ceremony of reception over, he made no objection, and thought it not beneath his commission, to sleep in the stable. A stall at the Black Bull, well made up, no doubt, with clean straw and blankets and sheets, was in reality "his apartments," as he called them, his bedroom! How he contrived to reconcile the show with the reality of his position would have puzzled saner heads than his.

His spirit of high-errantry, exercised at a critical moment, upon one occasion secured him the best of fare at the Black Bull. The cook, a winsome dame between twenty and thirty, had been assailed by a presuming scamp of the worst class of bagmen. The General, who always retired early to rest—like all great commanders, when circumstances permit—was enjoying a sound and healthy repose, for there had been no previous dispersing of impertinent youths to annoy him. The girl, perhaps knew where he lay, but Baggie did not, and thinking that his conquest would be an easy one, he made little ceremony in avowing insult. Finding flattery and the usual arts of an accomplishment rake ineffectual, he had recourse to force. The General, who was seldom at the trouble of undressing, rose growling to his feet, not quite satisfied as to the cause of disturbance; but it happened to be moonlight, he saw the struggle, and knew the voice of the cook, and in an instant sprang at the throat of the villain, dashing him down with great violance. In a very few minutes the iron grasp of the General would have finished his career for ever, had not the cook, alarmed, run for assistance, and saved her assailant when at the last gasp. Great was the praise awarded to General Brown, who seemed to know that he had done a noble action; and he never wanted a good dinner as long as the cook remained at the Black Bull.

The General, as we have said, was well respected and widely known Immediately after dismissing the militia staff on the morning described, he proceeded to pay his respects to a number of the leading inhabitants. He was a patron of literature, in his own way, and usually amongst the first places he called at was the office of the "Courier"—a newspaper started in the aristocratic interest in opposition to the original Whiggish "Advertiser." The General must have been a Tory in politics, for he never darkened the threshold of the latter journal: like a true soldier,

he supported the existing order of things, independent of all considerations. He had accordingly visited his friend of the printing office, where he was always made welcome and kindly treated; and although of a grave and taciturn manner, he seemed to take considerable interest in what was going on in the newspaper world. From the "Courier" he had proceeded to "Peter Stewart's snuff shop," where, Peter himself being an old soldier, the General was certain to have his great snuff-horn filled with the best rappee. Thence he had made a tour of the burgh, and been so plentifully helped from the barrels of the spirit shops, that, by the time we got out of the Academy, he was up to the charging mark and busily engaged in repelling as described, the obtrusive troops of impertinent boys.

Through the medium of the printer's devil—a rather smart, precocious, tricky limb of the Old One, named Willie Macmillan—we were a sort of privileged visitor to that, in our estimation, most mysterious place, a printing office. We can never forget with what rapture we gazed for the first time on what is called a "form" of letterpress, and lay over it for hours, delighted that we could make out certain words, or a sentence; and we have always had a warm side to types ever since. But we are wandering from our text. In the printing office we used frequently to meet the General afterwards. Early next summer it was we happened to be in the office rather late in the afternoon or evening: a buzz was heard outside; the windows were thrown open, and there appeared the General, bag and baggage, standard, long horn and all, followed by a crowd of delighted boys: up he came, with heavy tread, the four flight of stairs to the attic, which formed the composing room. He was attired much in the usual fashion, more gaudily, if possible, and, as formerly, was on his route to Ireland with important despatches. He had arrived by coach, but in consequence of some crowding of "his apartments" in the Black Bull, owing to a horse market next day, the General felt constrained to make the "Courier" his head-quarters. All hands cordially received him; and, relieved of his trappings, a plentiful supply of bread and cheese and ale regaled him satisfactorily. All this time he was serenaded by the crowd below, who only dispersed on finding that it was not likely he would be tempted to show himself again that night. We were curious as well as the printers, to know what the huge wallet, termed the baggage of the General, contained. In this we were at once to be gratified, and certainly felt surprise to find that his "kit" was of a very approved fashion, consisting of more clean shirts than would have served the late Sir Charles Napier to go to India with! and, carefully preserved among other things, he seemed proud to show us a pretty large-print octavo Bible. The tin case was opened, and the despatches unrolled for our particular inspection; and assuredly they were so couched and written, with seals and signets attached, that older heads than ours might have been deceived by their official appearance. With these the General was intensely uplifted.

We felt deeply interested in this singular character before us. There was a wild, unsteady glare in his grey eyes, and his words were few and far between, never dwelling upon one thing beyond a moment or two; yet at times we could fancy that an intellectual change came over his countenance, and he would laugh with a glee that might have been mistaken for the exhilaration of one entirely "compos mentis." He seemed much amused with a flaxen-haired, burly little boy about three years of age, son of John Leck, the pressman. Clapping the boy's head encouragingly, "Whose son are you?" said he. "My father's," said the little one unconsciously. "Ah, ha!" cried the General chuckling, "you are your father's son, are you? Very good! you are a clever

fellow; here is a penny for you!" The boy clutched the coin, and the General again clapped his head in token of high appreciation.

This little incident put the General into a happy humour, and he drew from his wallet a species of scrap-book, which had been made up for him by one of the printers in Aberdeen, if we are not mistaken, in which was pasted a cutting from the columns of some of the northern newspapers, recording the prowess of the General in an encounter with certain excisemen or constables, we forget which, who had unduly interfered with him or some one else whom he felt bound to protect. The General, it was said, very quickly put them "hors de combat," and the printers had placed the paragraph in the book that the chivalrous feat might be known to his friends. Like all brave men, however, he declined to dilate on the encounter; in short, no further details of it could be elicted than what the newpaper writer had given.

The General passed two or three days at Ayr on the occasion, making the "Courier" his head-quarters by night as well as by day—a rug spread out on the floor, and one of old wool-stuffed balls, that supplied ink to the types in these days, wrapped in brown paper, for a pillow, constituted his only bedding. The usual visits were paid—Peter Stewart filled his snuff-mull as formerly, and his friends the publicans made him merry, so that each day was less or more signalised by sundry desperate charges up the High Street from his stronghold, the "Courier" office close.

One great annoyance to the General was a lump of a fellow from the North of Ireland, bare-legged, coarse-featured deply pock-marked, and clad in a species of grey-frieze, who was called "Irish Sam." He had found his way across the Channel some weeks previous to the arrival of the General, and speedily attracted notice by his singular appearance and his art in amusing the crowd. One of his chief feats was to write with a pen held between the two first toes of his right foot, and then he could rattle his fingers with great power on an old shutter or an old door, accompanying himself by whistling or singing in a manner very musical, and which delighted the boys beyond measure. Sam, like most of the worthies in Ayr at that time, was considerably patronised by the printers, and on distribution days, when they were not so busy, and could indulge more freely in conversation and fun, used to come up and exercise his musical talents on the bulk-head. Though a favourite, he was, at the same time, generally considered "more rogue than fool"—three parts rogue, perhaps, and one part fool.

Sam was somewhat put out by the arrival of the General. He evidently shrank from the wild gaze of the extraordinary personage in military costume. Still he endeavoured to conceal his agitation under a deal of swagger, and the noise of the bulk-head and the Braham-like power of his vocalisations. The first occasion on which the two distinguished parties met will ever be memorable in our recollection. As Sam rattled and sang, the General walked up and down, eyeing him intently. He had probably at best no great taste for the concord of sweet sounds, but the discovery, which was soon made, that Sam was an Irishman, immediately upset all the equanimity of which he was master. Grasping his stick, and his eyes glancing fire, he rushed forward upon him, exclaiming, with uplifted arm, "Down, Derry, Down! You —— Irish scoundrel!" But Sam had been instinctively watching the General's excitement, and, avoiding the blow, he sprang terror-stricken over the bulk-head, flying down the close on the wings of lightning. The General pursued him with all possible agility, but the object of his wrath was speedily beyond reach.

Sam stealthily adventured into the office more than once afterwards, with the view of making up friendship, but the result was invariably

the same, having always to fly precipitately for his life. Sam not long afterwards left the town, and what became of him we cannot tell.

The General must long ago have paid "the debt of nature," but where or when we know not. The last time we saw him was in the town of Kilmarnock, in the latter end of 1826. It was a Sunday morning, immediately after the churches were rung in. It had rained heavily during the night, and still continued very wet. We happened to be looking through a window, contemplating the rolling gutters, and the myriads of old corks, sticks, and straws which the miniature flood was bearing onward to the great gulf of filth. Not a person appeared on the streets save the newly appointed superintendent of police, M'Callum, a Highlandman. The force, consisting of two men besides himself, had been recently embodied. Somewhat vain, apparently, of his official position, he was walking up and down the pavement, indifferent to the weather. Not far from the Police Office Lane, General Brown hove in sight, walking across King Street, apparently without any particular design, but quiet and orderly. M'Callum, with an air of totally uncalled-for severity, immediately collared him, and proceeded in an attempt to drag him towards the office. The General never remonstrated, so far as we could perceive, and we felt surprised at his forbearance. M'Callum was tall, of average strength, and he evidently felt confident of his prowess. Just as they were about to cross the raging gutter, however, we observed the General lean heavily against the superintendent, without touching him either with hand or foot, and over he went upon his back, the General falling above him, and lying there until satisfied that the gurgling and not pellucid stream had thoroughly soaked the superintendent to the innermost. Then he rose, looked round with a sinister grin of triumph, and walked off. M'Callum, meanwhile, getting to his feet, more dead than alive, was glad to hide "his diminished head" as fast as possible in the police office, leaving the General to pursue his way unmolested.

Upon what duty the General fancied himself to be employed at that time, or where he went to, no one could inform us. In vain we looked for his burly figure in the streets for days afterwards. Dead he now must be, but die when he might, we are sure it was with "the harness on his back." Altogether he was a singular illustration of the eccentric phases into which mental aberration runs, and he no doubt enjoyed as much happiness in his imaginary greatness, and the chivalric exercise of his prowess, as most warriors experience in the realities of successful ambition. The General may be said to have belonged to a type of a former age, exhibiting in his erratic and unsettled temperament much of that sternness and integrity of purpose which, under a more lucid development, would have raised him to a high position in life. Such wanderers were not uncommon in former times, and everywhere their appearance was hailed as a sort of relief to the monotonous sobriety of sane life. The species must have died out, or their existence is hidden in asylums.

The foregoing reminiscences of General Brown appeared in 1859 in the form of a little brochure, under the title of "Brown and his Friends, by Adam Black, A.M.," and was well spoken of by the Press. In a short notice of it, the Editor of the "Northern Ensign" says:—

"What reminiscences does this pamphlet call forth! Well do we remember 'General Brown,' at even a later date than that named by Mr Black. We think it was in 1831 that we last saw him, and can well remember how, on a fine September afternoon, during vacation,

when engaged at play, we, along with others of a like age, were startled by the appearance of the General, approaching on the highway, after an eight days' sojourn in the neighbouring town, where he had broken windows, chased an urchin, now a shipmaster, to the top of a house, and almost killed himself and his antagonist, and committed various depredations which rendered his apprehension a great public necessity. Soon after that General Brown was reported to have died in Morayshire, from the effects of a spree, and we can well recollect the satisfaction which the intelligence created throughout the school, and with what relief we all ventured out at night thereafter.

"The description of General Brown, in the pamphlet before us, is very correct and life-like. In one or two details the writer wants information which might have been useful, such as the early history of the General, who was bred to the army, fought in the Peninsula, and distinguished himself in Ireland, becoming deprived of reason by an injury in the head. But to the many to whom the General was known, particularly in Aberdeenshire, where his name was as much a cause of terror among the juveniles as that of Napoleon among adult rustics during the war with France, this little tome will be most acceptable. It will do more than call up the remembrances of the 'General.' It will awaken still more touching associations, which people are apt to forget when youth passes away, and they are involved in the whirlpool of business. It has had this effect upon us, and we thank Mr Black upon that account also."

We feel indebted to the writer for the information thus communicated. We were not aware that the General ever had been a soldier, but the fact accounts for and palliates its military hallucination.

About the same time, an anonymous correspondent wrote:—

"General Brown, when, in 1818, I was at school at Lanark, figured for a considerable interval at a time as a street pest. He was most affable to grown-up, and particularly to well-to-do folk, but ready, on the slightest provocation to do war with the boys, who were his perpetual foes. I remember the word 'screw' was painful to him, and he generally got no other name than 'General Screw' from the small population. He never had a sword. A walking stick was indispensable to keep him in motion, and this he always had.

"About this time the General had gone to a Carluke fair, and during the night he failed in one effort at house-breaking, but succeeded so far in a second effort. He was caught in the act, and put in the hands of the constables. Some transaction of the kind committed in the burgh of Lanark led the magistrates, while the General was in custody on a larger charge, to put him on trial, and he was sentenced to be banished from, and drummed out of the burgh. The ceremony of drumming out I was a witness to, and really it was affecting to see the creature performing the march with what of dignity he could assume. In 1826, while at Glasgow College, I met the General on the foot-path on the highway leading into Duke Street, and of course addressed him. He was going to the Barracks, and was way-worn and dirty. Just before parting I put the question, 'When were you in Lanark, General?' He limped off uttering 'Lanark be damned!'

"He was apt to follow the drum or to be in public places. He visited Lesmahagow, Biggar, Carnwath, and Carluke on fairs or great occasions."

[In the country south-west of Glasgow, the General had a high character for honesty. He would have been trusted anywhere, and with anything. It therefore sounds strange to our ears that he should have been caught in the act of robbery. Has our correspondent not mistaken the General for some other party?]

Another writer observes:—"I distinctly remember General Brown. The first time I saw him was at Ayr races. His appearance created considerable sensation on the course. He was dressed much as he has been described—with a helmet of the 17th Lancers, and the regimental motto, 'Death or Glory.' In addition, 'General Brown' was painted on it in legible letters.

"In one of his charges against the boys, he exclaimed, 'Some of you will spoil a market day, like Mary M'Kinnon,' alluding to a notorious character who had recently been executed for stabbing a man in a house on the South Bridge of Edinburgh. The Shira laughed heartily, as he happened to pass at the time."

"ROBERT HAMILTON, ESQ."

Of Saunfiel, Spalefiel, Clayfiel, and Whitebryfiel.

Rab was a character of much local notoriety, and such was his designation as described by himself. He was what may be called an innocent person, who molested no one, unless greatly provoked, and then his anger became terrific, though generally more severe upon himself than injurious to others; so much so that people, even the boys, who tormented him sorely, refrained from pushing their annoyance to extremes.

Rab was a native of Ayr, and it has been said that his father, if not a gentleman, was at least, as the old song has it, equal to "the Laird o' Brodie," and that he was connected with the Revenue Department. In the Ayr Register of Births the following entry occurs:—"Robert Hamilton, s. to John Hamilton, officer of excise, and Grizzel Douk, b. May 29, 1756." This is probably the identical parentage of the notable Rab, and no doubt the discovery will be highly interesting to the genealogist.

Be this as it may, he was a character not likely to be soon met with again. It would be almost vain to attempt a pen-and-ink portrait of him, for no words can convey an accurate idea of his face. At the time we speak of, Rab must have been bordering on, if not beyond sixty. We once had in our possession a capital portraiture of him in china ink, but what became of it surpasses our conjecture. He was of middle stature, or rather taller, generally dressed in a brown-black long-tailed coat, out at the elbows, small clothes or trousers of any colour, just as fortune favoured, and he walked with a halt, drawing the one leg, as it were, after the other. But the face was the indescribable part of the man. He was always looking upwards, as if striving to peer through the brim of his old, broken, and almost crownless hat, which he wore pressed down so far as to shade entirely the upper portion of his face. Sometimes he wore the "triple crown," as it was called—three such hats stuck one upon the top of the other. His nose might be termed graceful; but his mouth, which could hardly be said to be ever in its natural position, was wide, and drawn towards the eyes, forming a sort of semi-circle of wrinkles of the oddest description.

Rab was of a peculiar appearance, and at bottom, of a waggish disposition, and the twinkle of his small, half-closed eyes, with the up-turned wicks of his peculiarly constructed mouth, at once bespoke the cracked, if not actually insane, humour of the man. His father died

when he was young, and his upbringing devoted solely upon his mother, for whom, it is said, he entertained a strong affection. After her death he had no one to look to him, and he became a wanderer at large. The parish of Ayr would willingly have kept him, and the authorities placed him for some time in the Poor's-House; but he preferred a wandering life, roaming over, in regular periodical stages, nearly the entire bounds of the county. Beyond that we never heard of his venturing, except upon one notable occasion.

The visit of George the Fourth to Scotland, in 1822, created great excitement, no sovereign of Great Britain having crossed the Border previously since the story days of Charles I. and II. It was the dream and talk of every town and village in the country, and, as a matter of course, Ayr was not behind others. Even Rab himself became infected with the Royal fever, and went about muttering that he "micht gang to Embro' to see ye King."

In prospect of this auspicious event, a loyal citizen, and enthiastic admirer of everything connected with Burns the late Mr David Auld, had two elegant chairs manufactured from the rafters of "Alloway's Auld Haunted Kirk," one of which he meant to present to the King, and the other to Sir Walter Scott. The King's chair was richly embroidered, and Mr Auld kindly had it exhibited to the denizens before being sent to Edinburgh. One of "the merry lads of Ayr" persuaded Rab that, if he went to Edinburgh, besides seeing the King, he was sure, being a native of Ayr, to be admitted to the presentation.

Rab accordingly decided on making the journey, and started in high expectation to the capital. On the road he lived, he he generally did, by his wits, although he had to sleep a few nights by the way-side, he at length arrived in Edinburgh, nothing the worse of his fatigue. Some of the citizens of Ayr who saw him in Edinburgh used to describe his dumbfoundered look, as he gazed on "the palaces and towers" of Edina, the crowds of people, and immense preparations for receiving the King. He was quite bewildered, and forgot all about the chair. The King having duly arrived, and the excitement over, Rab fell into his old knowing, sauntering habit. Going down the High Street, his attention was taken up with the high houses which line both sides of it, and he got unconsciously into a crowd. Something about a chair caught his quick ear (for he could either be deaf or sharp of hearing as suited him); and listening for a little he heard a ballad singer chanting the well-known ditty composed on the occasion by Sir Alexander Boswell :—

"Were ye at Holyrood,
Saw ye him there?
Saw ye meikle Geordie
Sit in his chair?"

Rab instinctively jumped to the conclusion that this meant the chair presented by Mr Auld, and immediately inquired at some of the by-standers where he could see the King sitting on "the chair that cam' frae the toun o' Ayr?" Only getting himself laughed at, he chanced to meet a person from the "auld toun" whom he knew, and forthwith told him of the dilemma in such an excited state, that his friend was glad to escape from the crowd as fast as possible.

Whether Rab's desire was gratified, or whether the chair had ever been presented—the fact not having been officially announced—we are not aware; but shortly afterwards it was rumoured that Sir William Curtis, Lord Mayor of London, who accompanied the King, had given the presentation the go-by, and ordered the chair to be put into the strong-room at Holyrood, as an evil-disposed person had informed him the rafters, out of which the chair was made, had been stolen from the roof of Alloway Kirk by "Cutty Sark."

Rab's wanderings throughout the county were annoying to the authorities, and so anxious were the Magistrates at one time to keep him in the Poor's-House, where his wants could be attended, to, that they thought of restraining him by chaining a log of wood to his leg. It had the desired effect for some time, but such was his longing for liberty, that he at length clutched up the chain and marched off unknown to his keeper, with the block hanging over his arm. In this fashion he walked down through the streets to the shipbuilding yard, and being a favourite amongst the men, they agreed to his request by striking off the encumbrance. Rab shook the dust from his feet upon the good town in consequence, and did not return again for some years.

Numerous anecdotes of his pawky wit were continually floating, both while he lived and after his death; and for many a day the jocular laird of Doonside used to amuse his friends, in public and private, by telling stories, imitating the voice, and singing the rhymes which Rab is said to have himself composed. One of these was a short song on the Ayrshire yeomanry called "Oswald's Cavalrie," Oswald of Auchencruive being Colonel or Captain of the regiment at the time. Of course the gallant deeds of the corps were duly dilated upon. Another of his ditties was in celebration of a ninth part of a man, who, on some occasion or other, had offended him. The only portion of it at present floating in our memory is little more than the "o'ercome"—

"Ance upon a time, a tailor neat an' fine,
Spied a louse on his left shouther bane;
He took up his shears, and clippit aff its ears;
The louse gi'ed a roar, and ye tailor took ye door;
But he cam back wi' speed, when he thocht the louse was dead.

Spoken—

Hit it ower the back wi' an elwand,
An' ye tailor drew stich again, again;

Noo ye tailor was sae crouse, that he had killed a louse,

Acted—

Jump up an' down the floor, up an' down the floor.

Cry, I kill a louse, I kill a louse,
And what can I, a poor tailor, do mair."

There was another ditty, recording the malpractices of "Blackguard Jamie Jellie," a small huckster in Ayr, who had incurred the ire of the mob on one occasion, by attempting to raise the price of meal at a period of great scarcity and dearth. It was a favourite amusement with the boys at night, when they caught Rab on the streets, to compel him to leap over a straw, or sing a song: generally he preferred the latter alternative, but not without a groan so deep and loud as to alarm the vicinity—"Oh! de boys! Oh! de boys!" And then, in a see-saw manner, and monotonous tone, he would grind away most inaudibly and inarticulately "Oswald's Caval-rie," or "Ye tailor," or "Blackguard Jamie Jellie, O," plainly testifying how reluctantly he engaged in the entertainment. But promise him money, for he was fond of "filthy lucre," and the whole performance underwent a vivifying and exciting change. When offered as a reward, by one who wished to try his knowledge of the currency, with his choice of a sixpence or a penny, "O ay," said Rab, "I's no' greedy, I's tak' the wee ane," clutching the piece of silver very nimbly, lest it might be withdrawn.

Rab was extremely fond of strong drink, whisky he could swallow like May dew, and as for "gude yill," he could have ducked and dived in it. It was incredible the quantity of ale he could have drank at a draught; and as for whisky, it used to be said that, put a glass in a stoupful of water, he would drink up the whole that he might be sure of it—"Ay!" quo' Rab, "an it war a mile to ye boddam."

A character, somewhat like himself, named "Daft Jamie," from Glasgow, well known in that city, made a tour to Ayr upon one occasion, and the two worthies happening to meet, they agreed to splice their coppers for a quart of ale in Jean Culbert's famed ale-house in the Newton. The jug was placed before them, and Rab, taking up the flowing can, raised it to his lips, and swallowed the contents without drawing a breath. Laying it down, evidently refreshed, before his thirsty companion, "Ye see," said he, "that's ye Ayrshire fashion!" "And that," said the disappointed Jamie, grasping the empty jug and knocking him down with it, "that's the Glasgow fashion!" Rab's excuse for finishing the ale was that he "wanted to see the bonnie wee flower at the bottom o' ye jug."

Although fond of strong ale, Rab was a zealous attender of the church, and the "godlie Mr Peebles," of the Newton, was his beau ideal of a clergyman, notwithstanding the opinion Burns entertained of him as a poet. The ministers of the Establishment in the old town were esteemed moderates by the more evangelical class of church-goers, amongst whom Rab no doubt classed himself. On one occasion, for what reason we never heard, he had persuaded himself to attend worship in the Old Church. He took his place on the stair, as was his wont in the Newton Church, but being rather late, he popped his head through the railings to learn the psalm from some one below. That obtained, he drew back, but finding the passage obstructed by his ears, which were none of the smallest, he cried out in his alarm, to the astonishment and amusement of the congregation, "Oh dear! what will become of me? Better couldna happen't! leaving my ain guid and godlie Mr Peebles to hear the drones of the Auld Kirk!" By the assistance of the bedral, Rab was relieved from the novel species of jougs in which he had placed himself, and away he hilched, muttering something like a malison on "ye drones o' ye Auld Kirk!"

Shortly after this accident Rab was met by the Rev. Mr Auld, who inquired at him the cause of the disturbance. Rab explained the matter in his own style. "Well," said Mr Auld, "you had better come again and hear me preach." "No, deed, sir," was the reply, "ye dinna preach, ye only read."

On another occasion he was met by the same rev. gentleman, who was a fine specimen of the more tolerant clergy, always plain and kindly in his personal intercourse. "Well, Robin," he said, "how are you getting on? What is your news?" "Hoo!" said Rab, with one of his peculiar grins, as he peered upwards through the broken rim of his old hat, "I kenna, sir, aquiell; only I had a queer dream ye ither nicht." "Ay, Robin," rejoined Mr Auld, "and what might that be?" "Ou, sir, I thocht I was lifted into ye cluds, an' I rappit at ye door of heaven, an' ye angel speer't at me whar I cam' frae. Frae ye toun o' Ayr, I said; an' then he speer't what kirk I belang'd to, an' I said to ye kirk o' ye godlie Mr Peebles o' ye Newton! Ay, come in, said ye angel, I thocht sae, for there has na been a saul frae ye auld kirk o' Ayr sin' ye days o' ye gude John Welsh!" So saying, Rab slipped off, leaving Mr Auld to swallow the application as he best might.

The Rev. Mr Cuthill, colleague of Mr Auld, had, upon one occasion, asked a blessing on the breakfast at the Poor's House. When about to leave, Rab remarked, "Oh, ay, Mr Cuthill, there's surely a blessin'

in the Poor's House parritch, for when I tak' a spoonfu' oot they aye fill up again."

Rab had a sly way of drawing upon the charitable—especially of the fair sex. A lady once gave him a plateful of soup in her kitchen. After praising and supping it, "Ye'll ken Mrs A——," said Rab, naming a comely lady in the neighbourhood. "Oh, she's a fine woman, kind, unco' kind, and bonnie, ay, bonnie is she no, just like yoursel'? Weel, she gaed me a platefu' o' kail ae day, an', efter it was done, a daad o' beef." The ruse was successful, and Rab could say that he had dined for that day.

He made strange remarks sometimes, generally with the view of eliciting money. "Ye're a Hamilton," we heard him say to a bein looking farmer one day at the Cross of Kilmarnock. "Ay," said the farmer, "hoo d'ye ken? "I ken by your nose," answered Rab. It so happened that the party had rather a well- formed frontal development, and a gift of sixpence rewarded Rab for the compliment. ,

A grand funeral passed along the High Street of Ayr one day, on its way to the Auld Kirk-yard. It was that of a rich, miserly old laird. "Ay, there he gaes," said Rab, "an' no' a bawbee in his pouch.

It is curious to mark how unrestrained freedom is coveted by the most insane of men, as well as the lowest class of animals. Well might the old poet exclaim—"Oh, freedom is a noble thing!" Rab might have enjoyed comparative ease and comfort in the Poor's House at Ayr, but rather than undergo the restraint necessary in such establishments, he preferred to wander from town to town, enjoying what he called a "fat bit" to-day, obtained from the cook of some of the inns, and probably little better than starving to-morrow; imbibing to-day perhaps a stoupful of "sour yill"—which he relished more than sweet, to-morrow slaking his thirst out of a ditch by the way-side; sleeping at night, it might be, in a rick of hay, or at best in a stable among dirty straw. Often have we seen him and pitied him, emerging from his place of so-called rest, on a cold frosty winter morning, it might be, and proceeding to the well, which he pumped upon both feet and legs, the shoes and stockings, if such they might be called, never having been removed. This he did, as he used to say, "to saften his corns." Notwithstanding the extreme hardships to which he was subjected, he lived to be at least sixty-five, and might have attained to a much greater age but for his penchant for ale, and the thoughtless conduct of some parties about Old or New Cumnock, who, with a tempting quantity of "sour yill," his favourite beverage, mixed a doze of tobacco juice. Perhaps they intended only to cause nausea and sickness, but the experiment caused death! We never heard that the authorities took up the case.

There were a number of other eccentric characters, most of them contemporaries of Rab. We can only afford room for little more than a bare list of their names:—

"The Flying Counsellor."—Amongst the many notables of the "Guid Auld Toun," we must not forget Quintin Muir, the "Flying Counsellor." He had been bred a lawyer—hence the sobriquet—but he was not plodding enough to follow out his profession. There he might be seen—a tall figure, with a well-darned overcoat reaching to his heels—standing at "Davie Auld's Corner," surrounded by a knot of idlers, to whom he is explaining some knotty point of law. He had the reputation of being a thorough local genealogist—and certainly he knew a vast deal about family history. He told strange stories of "the men of acres" in the district, but could never be induced to put them in writing. He seemed to have a lawyer-like repugnance to

commit himself—so much so that if he saw any one of his auditory attempting to take notes, he instantly stopped short and decamped.

Quintin was believed to be a descendant of the Muirs of Auchendrane; but how he subsisted no one seemed to know. He lived at the Townhead with a sister, somewhat crazy like himself. The house was their own property. They had a brother, a seaman, who also had a little of the "bee in his bonnet," and when he came home from his voyages there was sure to be a row. He drank, and quarrelled with both brother and sister, and turning them out of the house, used to swear he "would make them walk Spanish." The meaning of which was that they should "walk the plank" as the Spanish pirates were in the habit of treating their unhappy captives. All the Townhead knew when "the sailor" was at home.

Willie Mitchell was rather morose, and famed as a singer of psalms. He was latterly confined almost entirely to the Poor's House, and at length, in a fit of passion, felled one of the inmates with a hatchet. His trial excited considerable interest, but it was clearly proved that he was not accountable for his actions.

Sergeant Shaw was another street notoriety—of innocent habits. After walking a few steps very composedly, he would stand still and commence, with extended arms, as if drawing something down from the clouds. This he called "pulling down the moon."

Archie Murray gave recitations. He was rather excitable, however, and he and the boys were usually at war.

Kirsty Brown was famed for her street dancing.

Jock Nicol was the son of a widow who kept a small tavern at the foot of the Boat Vennel. He had an unnaturally large head, and was weak of intellect; but was said to know something of navigation. In short, he passed for a "dungeon of wit" in this respect, and his time was mostly spent about the harbour. He was fond of angling for seys, or poodlies, as they are called on the east coasts of Scotland, and might daily be seen at the point of the quay, seated among a lot of boys. When his cork disappeared suddenly under water, Jock would exclaim, "Ay, that's an auld ane." He had also the reputation of being a poet, but the quality of his rhymes may be judged by a single example:—

"Cooper Orr lives at the shore,
Mak's barrels by the score."

David Haswell, or Hassell, as he was named for shortness, was the Baron Munchausen of Ayr. The public scavengers occupied a crazy tenement at the end of the "Auld Jail." He said he remembered when the houses extended all the way across the firth to Arran; and in a clear day the lum-taps were still visible.

He had often, he said, made voyages to Guernsey, and the ship he sailed in was so large that, when she tacked about, the bowsprit swept the cattle off "Brown Carrick Hill"; that upon one occasion a man fell into the kail-pot, and it was necessary to launch the ship's boat to save him. On another, one of the men had his head shot off in a fight with the enemy, and David picked it up and stuck it on so quickly that he was scarcely aware of his misfortune. The captain remarked that, in the hurry, he had put it on the wrong way. "Never mind," said David, "he'll make a capital rope-spinner!"

David was an excellent shot. Upon one occasion, his ammunition being expended, and seeing a string of wild geese flying overhead, he fired off the ramrod, which shivered them like herring; the rod, falling down into a burn, killed a salmon, and the report of the gun sent him back on a hare that happened to pass at the moment.

David is said to have believed all his stories himself, for he stopt short at the least symptom of incredulity on the part of his hearers. He was so well known as a vendor of fables, that it came to be a saying of anything doubtful, "Ah, that's a Davie Hassell."

There were other celebrities, in more recent times, who must still be remembered by many, such as Blood, Jamie Rumpie, Daft Gib, who "could neither work nor want," &c.

Of a different stamp, no doubt, were Tallyrand and Jackie Houlston, both persons in business, but fond of deviltry, and wits in their way. Jackie was agreeably surprised when the postman delivered a letter one morning containing a cheque for £1000. He had never seen such a document before, and ignorant how to proceed, he consulted his friend Tallyrand. There could be no dubiety about the matter, the letter was addressed to "John Houlston, Esq., Ayr," all right, the only perplexity being as to who the kind friend was that had sent him such a plentiful supply of the needful. Jackie went to the bank, and got the money, and the first thing he did with it was to drive Tallyrand and himself in a carriage to Maybole. There they dined at the inn in a manner suited to the characters assumed—Jackie as the British Foreign Secretary, and Tallyrand as the great French diplomatist of that name. The affair got wind, and all were eager to congratulate the barber on his unexpected accession of fortune. It turned out at last that the money was not intended for Jackie at all, but to a name somewhat similar belonging to a firm which had not long before begun their mining operations in Ayrshire. All the money, however, was timeously recovered from Jackie, save what he and Tallyrand had so innocently spent in their frolic to Maybole. Tallyrand was so named from his having a halt in one of his limbs.

Johnnie Dickie kept a small shop, and dealt in various wares. The boys used to annoy him a good deal by running off with the end of his reel of twine, asking lights, and puffing powder at his candle, &c. At one time he sold pies, which were fired in an oven behind the shop. The back wall of the oven had formed part of the old Tolbooth, and was not quite secure. He repeatedly missed some of the pies—never taking out as many as he put in. Various of his attendants were blamed for the theft. At length he resolved to watch the oven himself—the darkness of his shop showed the interior of the oven all the better. At length he saw one pie beginning to edge quietly away, then another, and another! Mad with fright and anger, he shouted—"D———n the pies! catch the pies! whaur's the pies gaun to?" The magic operation was explained by the fact that the boys had discovered the rickety condition of the oven wall, and having excavated a hole of sufficient dimensions, they nightly succeeded, by means of long, hooked wires, in regaling themselves with "Johnnie Dickie's" pies.

It would exceed the limits which we propose to give to these pages if we gave even a tithe of the stories which could be told of "Auld Ayr." A great many of these are to be found in Dean Ramsay and the "Laird of Logan," so need not be repeated. We cannot, however, refrain from giving the following, which occurred to the minister of the First Charge in Ayr about the beginning of the century, and was then and may still be denominated "The De'il and the Minister." The worthy and reverend Doctor had been paying a visit to a friend who resided in the Green, now Wellington Square, and as the crack was good, the punch-bowl attractive, and the company excellent, the honest divine protracted his sitting till near midnight. At the time of bidding good night to his host the Doctor found the night dark and starless. His road home-

ward lay along Fort Street, which was then very lonely and unenlivened by artificial light; but as it was rather his nearest road to his dwelling, which was situated near the centre of the School Vennel, he ventured that way, unconscious of any impending danger. At that period superstition had not quite disappeared from the country, and Ayr was tainted with visions, thoughts, and stories of the supernatural. The Fort especially, from its weirdlike appearance and antiquity, was said to be the scene of numberless sports of ghosts, hobgoblins, and imps. I perfectly remember, when a boy, that neither I nor any other child would pass this locality at night for the world, for fear of being spirited away by some of the wild demons said to inhabit it. Well, as the good, honest, reverend old gentleman was nearing the Fort, and perchance thinking of the hospitality he had just been a sharer of, and perchance thinking also of the wild tales told about the Fort and its spiritual inhabitants, he was suddenly seized by the shoulders from behind. In astonishment and fear he turned his head to see who or what had caught him—report does not say whether a short and fervent ejaculation did not at the same time escape him; that may be safely left to the fancy of the reader. To his terror and dismay he saw a horrible head adorned with monstrous horns looking him straight in the face! A hundred fancies flashed across his mind, but the uppermost was that Old Nick himself, for some purpose, had been allowed to catch him; and who, in a similar situation, would have thought otherwise? In his dilemma the man of peace first uttered a cry, then blessed himself, then tried to free himself from Satan by prayer and exorcism, but all would not do; the clutches of the Prince of Darkness remained firm on his shoulders, and he was a powerful captive to the Evil One. The Doctor struggled manfully, unwilling to be taken a voluntary prisoner, and by his efforts loosened the hold of the visible-invisible enemy from his shoulders, but only to be caught by the coat-tails. The divine was sure that Satan had hold of him, and tried what running would do. Onward he ran, trying to disentangle himself from the grip of his enemy, and as he ran he shouted and cried for help, but, alas! there was none at hand. The foe behind kept hold of his coat tails, like Cutty Sark by the tail of Tam o' Shanter's grey mare; but, unlike the tail of the mare, the tails of the coat remained attached to the body, showing at once the quality of the broadcloth and the strength of the stitches of the snip who made the garment. Thus forward did the minister and Clootie run till they got to the midst of the School Vennel. Here the clergyman roared more lustily and loudly than ever for help. His cry of distress was this time fortunately heard by the inmates of one of the houses, and help came to the distressed and harassed preacher in the person of the late Colonel M'Kenzie, who seeing the good man in such a plight relieved him from the grasp of his Satanic Majesty. His Majesty, when light was procured, turned out to be a poor goat belonging to Mr Paul, jailor, and which, when grazing about the Fort, had broken loose from its confinement and made to the streets to see what could be got there. The poor goat was as much frightened as the minister, and as glad to be released from the involuntary junction it had made with the gospel messenger. The fact was that the Doctor's coat had outside pockets, and in the struggle the paws of the goat slipped from the shoulders to the pockets, and there held firm as a rock. The more efforts were made to disentangle, the more securely were the paws held; hence the cause of the ludicrous scene and laughable occurrence. The cloth of the wearer in this instance did good service, as it has done in many other cases; the affair was not made very public, but was often the theme of much gossip among private circles, and the Deil and the Minister became a standing joke.

BURNS' MONUMENT SITE.

The site first thought of as suitable for the erection of the Monument was close to the Cottage in which Burns was born, which at that time had been acquired by the Incorporation of Shoemakers of Ayr. It seems, however, that the site on the banks of the Doon near Alloway Kirk was, after consideration, and no doubt after some warm controversy, settled upon, and that, too, in spite of the following protest, which we give in full, as showing at least the feeling on the part of those who did not approve of the site chosen:—

BURNS' MONUMENT.

Ayr, 16th February, 1820.

A rumour having gone forth that the Incorporation of Shoemakers of Ayr, who are the proprietors of the ground on which the Cottage stands where Burns, the Poet, first drew breath, had either refused to give the ground necessary for the site of the Monument, or required such a compensation, or proposed such terms as put it beyond the power of the Committee appointed by the Subscribers to the Monument to accede—the Incorporation feel it but a duty to themselves, and a requisite explanation to the public, to lay before them this statement.

The resolution of erecting a Monument to Burns at the place of his birth had scarcely been formed, ere the Incorporation, zealous in marking their respect for the son of their predecessor in the lands, and anxious to promote the views of the County, communicated to the Convener of the Committee their desire to make a grant of the land necessary for the site of the Monument. This intention was made known in the first instance verbally, and when the subscription was in a state of considerable forwardness, they received this communication from the Convener:—"I was early made acquainted with the perfect ground for a site; but it is requisite that there should be a written declaration to that effect, which I may lay before the Committee, and which may be the ground of further procedure." In consequence of this letter, they immediately applied for and obtained from the tenant on the ground, at some expense and trouble, a relinquishment of his right of tack to the ground, in so far as it would be required for the Monument, and made a willing and formal tender of it to the Committee, absolutely, unconditionally, and without the least pecuniary consideration. This grant, cheerfully and generously as (they may be allowed to say) it was bestowed, they had every reason to believe was received with those feelings it was calculated to excite; and in a short time afterwards the ground was examined, and the exact spot chosen, and marked off by the gentlemen employed by the Committee for that purpose. Throughout the whole transaction the wishes of the Committee were in no respects counteracted; but, on the contrary, the actions and dispositions of the Incorporation were of such a nature as clearly evinced their cordiality in seconding the views of the Committee, not simply without the desire of gain, but at some sacrifice, in a pecuniary point of view, to themselves. The transaction being thus willingly entered into and conclusively determined, on their part, and the Committee having solicited, obtained, accepted of, selected, and marked off the ground for the situation of the Monument; and matters remaining in this state for years, they could not fail to be surprised at finding, from a late advertisement, that the Monument was not to be raised at the place thus granted, accepted, chosen, and prepared, but at another and totally different place upwards of a quarter

of a mile from thence; and that surprise has not been diminished by any explanation made to them on the subject, for, in reality, and up to this hour, no communication whatever, direct or indirect, has been made.

Whilst the Incorporation of Shoemakers trust they have shown that their conduct, so far from being a fit subject of reprobation, has been, on the contrary, worthy of commendation, they cannot deny that the unexpected and abrupt change of site has given too much ground for remark. The reasons for preferring a place where Burns was not born, to one where he was born—a place belonging to a stranger to the family, to one which was the property of his father—a place where a Monument can be seen at double the distance, and from whence, besides a view of the more immediate objects of Burns' Muse, there is a distant and almost unbounded prospect—a place for which a considerable sum is to be paid, to one offered gratuitously—have not been explained, and are very far from being obvious. They cannot but admit that the circumstances naturally gives scope for the attribution of blame, but they protest it ought not to fall unjustly upon them.

Though the Incorporation are inclined to think this statement will serve the purpose of preventing any farther aspersion of their conduct, yet, to put it beyond question, they have resolved to give, and do now offer to give, not only the ground gratuitiously, but One Hundred Pounds out of their funds, besides what they may describe individually, providede the Monument be built on the place where Burns was born; with a suitable Dining Hall for the accommodation of the admirers of the Poet,—a thing that may possibly still be done, as not materials have hitherto been led to the situation, and not one stone, as yet, placed above another. Or should it be too late to do this, and it correspond with the view of the public, that a Monument should still be raised at the spot where Burns really was born, they will make the same sacrifices for that purpose. Should the first of these propositions meet the approbation of the Committee, at the last, that of the public, they will do what in them lies to carry their proposals promptly and fully into effect.

ROBT. MANN, Deacon.

Wisely or unwisely, however, the Monument was erected where it now stands, and even the Incorporation of Shoemakers have sold the Cottage to the Trustees, who have transformed it from a public-house to a quiet refreshment room, which thousands visit annually, forming a triple attraction to the neighbourhood, viz., the Cottage, the Monument, and Alloway Kirk.

Acts of the Burgh of Ayr.

Before concluding these Notes and Sketches of Ayr, past and present, we may be permitted to reprint, by way of comparision, an extract from a work published in 1830, descriptive of Ayr at that date. The writer says:—"At no period in the history of our town have the Magistrates of Ayr exhibited more of the march of improvement and reform than those of the present day (1830), and to them and their immediate predecessors chiefly is to be ascribed the many improvements which are going on and completed in the town, and by the following Acts, which are for the most part strictly enforced, and several other Regulations with regard to the discontinuance of certain kinds of work on Sabbath days, the Burgh of Ayr are judicious in the policy of their internal government:—

1. That butcher meat be sold by the imperial weight, and that it be sufficiently bled, and not pricked, blown, or scored, and no flesher having a shop on the public street shall, on any account, expose his meat for sale on the outside, nor shall any of the meat project beyond the doors, under the penalty of five shillings and confiscation of the flesh.

2. That Scotch butter and cheese be sold by the imperial weight, under the penalty of five shillings.

3. That corn and other grains, sold by measure, shall be by the imperial bushel, or proportional parts thereof, in terms of the Act 9th Geo. IV. cap. 74, and stamped by the Dean of Guild, under the penalty of twenty shillings sterling.

4. That the Vivres brought into the Burgh for sale on the Market Day be sold at the New Market, and no other place, under the penalty of ten shillings for each transgression. And masters and mistresses to be liable for their servants. And huxters or retailer are prohibited from buying vivres for the sale before twelve o'clock mid-day, under the penalty of eight shillings and fourpence.

5. That, hereafter, all dung, manure, midding-steads, or other rubbish put out on the public street shall be removed therefrom by eleven o'clock forenoon from 1st November to 1st March, and by nine o'clock morning from 1st March to 1st November, under the penalty of ten shillings, besides the confiscation of the dung; and all rubbish from buildings shall be carried off to and laid down in such place or places as the Dean-of-Guild shall point out, and nowhere else within the Burgh; and that no dung or other nastiness be laid within ten yards of any of the town's public wells, and that no fish or other like articles be cleaned at any of the wells, under the penalty of five shillings for each offence.

6. That all carts and ladders used by slaters and others be removed from the streets under cloud of night, under the penalty of ten shillings, and in default of payment the articles to be seized and sold.

7. That all dogs shall be confined within doors under cloud of night, under the penalty of five shillings. And that no butcher's dogs shall be allowed to enter the Flesh-Market or Slaughter-house, under the penalty of two shillings and sixpence sterling.

8. That all malt used within the Burgh or Territories be made of sufficient grain, properly dighted and cleaned of commings, under the pain of forfeiture, and the seller to be fined in ten shillings for each offence.

9. That the inhabitants be attentive in keeping their chimneys clean, under the penalty of five shillings for each foul vent taking fire, over and above damage occasioned by such foul vent, and the expense of extinguishing it.

10. That when horses die within the Burgh, Parish, or Barony of Alloway, the owner shall be obliged to bury them at a sufficient depth under ground, under the penalty of twenty shillings for each offence, to be exacted from the person in whose custody the horse last was, at the suit of the Procurator-Fiscal.

11. That the inhabitants who keep swine shall confine them to styes, and not suffer them to go upon the streets, under the penalty of five shillings, besides confiscation of the swine.

12. That no illuminations or bonfires take place within the burgh but by the authority of the Magistrates, under the penalty of £5 sterling, and the forfeiture of the convener's freedom if he be a burgess. And every burgess being accessary to any riot or mob within the burgh, or refusing to assist the Magistrates in the suppression thereof, shall not only forfeit his freedom, but be otherwise punished. And journeymen, apprentices, and other inhabitants of the burgh concerned in any riot or mob shall be punished with the utmost rigor of law.

13. That all persons bringing into, or taking through the burgh, any bull, cow, or ox, shall have the animal properly haltered and guarded, as the practice hitherto of driving cattle and sheep in droves, and the carting of Scotch wood from the country, through the town is attended with danger to the inhabitants, all such shall, in future, be taken by the back parts of the town, by Dalblair Road and through Fullarton and Fort Streets, in all case when going to places beyond the burgh, under the penalty of ten shillings for each offence.

14. That no person leaving his horse and cart, or carriage, upon the street without some person taking care of the same, and that no driver of carriages drive his horse furiously upon the street, or quicker than an ordinary trot, under the penalty of five shillings for each offence. Also, that no person ride faster on the street than an ordinary trot, under the like penalty. And that no horses be allowed to go loose upon the street under the like penalty.

15. That no carpets be shaken over the window into the street, or upon the streets, or in any of the public lanes of the burgh, and that no water be thrown from windows in the streets or lanes, under the penalty of five shillings for each offence. And no servants are to stand on the outside of windows when cleaning the same, under the like penalty; and masters and mistress are liable for their servants.

16. That any person wantonly breaking any of the town's lamps, or defacing the names of streets or numbers of houses, shall be fined in £3 sterling, besides making good the damage.

17. That no person cut down or bring into the town any trees, or branches of trees, for ornamenting windows on the king's birth-day, under the penalty of five shillings sterling.

18. That no person enter any yard or garden on Halloween for the purpose of pulling kail stocks, under the penalty of five shillings for each offence, besides imprisonment.

19. That no live sheep or calves be carried upon the streets of the burgh on horseback by butchers and others, under the penalty of ten shillings; and carters wilfully over-loading their horses shall be punished as the law directs.

20. That the Act of Council anent the keeping of gunpowder in shops, or elsewhere, within the burgh be strictly enforced; and that no more than two pounds of such powder be kept together, for retail, by any dealers or other person, and if loose, to be in a bottle always corked, except during sale, and to be sold during day light only, under the penalty of £10 sterling.

21. That the Web Market shall be held on the stated day of every fair week and shall commence as early on that day as buyers and sellers chuse to attend: but there shall be no buying or selling of webs on the day preceding, under the penalty of five shillings sterling for each web, to be paid by both buyer and seller.

22. That all persons building houses within the Burgh shall, at their own expense, cause the premises to be inclosed, and a lamp or lamps to be placed there during night while the building is going on, to prevent injury to any person passing by, under the penalty of twenty shillings, over and above the damage that may be sustained by such neglect.

23. All huxters or other dealers found selling any article of merchandize on Sabbath shall be fined 5s for each offence.

24. All possessors of shops or ground storeys of any house within the Burgh shall cause the footpaths opposite their respective possessions to be kept clear of all packages or other incumbrances affecting the free passage of the footpaths, and shall also cause the same to be swept and scraped once every lawful day before the hour of nine in the morning, under the pain of five shillings for each offence.

25. The Magistrates, Council, and Community considering that for some time past a practice highly indecent and dangerous has crept in of showing stallions and other horses upon the public streets of the burgh, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants and to the imminent danger of their lives; and considering that the ground at the Townhead of Ayr, set apart specially for a Horse Market, has always been considered the proper place for such shows, it is therefore ordered that all persons showing such animals shall do so at the Horse Market at the Townhead of Ayr, and nowhere else within the Burgh or Liberties, under the pain of 20s for each offence.

The Bailies besides exercise a power of deciding in cases of 6s 8d and under viva voce, without any writing whatever, and of enforcing their sentences given on these accounts.

The Magistrates of Ayr are chosen every year, in terms of their Charter, in the beginning of October. The system of self-election, so much prevalent in former years, has now quite subsided, and every individual elected into office is of the free spontaneous choice of the respective franchise. The Provost and Bailies are in general re-elected, and remain in office two years.

The characteristics of the inhabitants is sobriety, loyalty, and patriotism, and under the auspices of the efficient magistracy the respectability of the town has been hitherto maintained."

Ayr, March, 1830.

There have been many changes since this date; let us hope, however, that, as regards the present day, no change need be made in the closing sentence of the above.

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